

Forty years since the Battle of Lewisham  
>>Pages 10&11

**NAZI NATIONAL  
FRONT SMASHED**



Crisis as right wing attacks on the  
government mount >>Pages 8, 14&15

**What should the left  
say about Venezuela?**



# Socialist Worker

£1 | No 2566 | 9-15 August 2017 | socialistworker.co.uk

## BOSSSES HIT THE JACKPOT



**SIR MARTIN SORRELL  
WPP  
£48,100,000**



**ARNOLD DONALD  
CARNIVAL  
£22,400,000**



**RAKESH KAPOOR  
RECKITT BENCKISER  
£14,600,000**

# MAKE THE FAT CATS PAY OUT

**Why our  
unions should  
up the stakes  
in pay fight**

>>Pages 5, 7 and 19

### COURT CASE

**'Serious questions  
remain' over  
terror trial**

THREE MEN from Birmingham and a man from Stoke-on-Trent were convicted this month of plotting terror attacks.

The four were jailed for life. Gareth Peirce, the lawyer for Naveed Ali and Khobaib Hussain, has said serious questions remain about the case.

>>Page 6

### ANTI-RACISM



**Cops' claims  
unravel over  
Rashan Charles**

THE COPS' pet watchdog, the IPCC, confirmed last week that Rashan Charles did not swallow illegal drugs before he died.

A "mixture of paracetamol and caffeine" had been removed from his airway.

Rashan's family said the news "must not detract from our primary concern".

>>Page 3

### LABOUR

**Calls for Labour  
to back freedom  
of movement**

LABOUR activists, MPs and some trade union leaders have launched a campaign to "defend and extend" freedom of movement.

The new Labour Campaign for Free Movement calls on Labour's leadership to defend freedom of movement.

>>Page 4



## THE THINGS THEY SAY

### 'Prefer jobs in social or artistic areas'

A google software engineer explains the lack of women in top tech jobs was due to biological differences and that women like art

### 'The hellish reality of Corbyn's socialism'

A Daily Mail newspaper editorial attacks Corbyn over his support for Venezuela

### 'Socialism never works'

The Mail presumably thinks that capitalism does

### 'We should beware of Jeremy Corbyn and his more sinister sidekick John McDonnell'

Daily Mail article explaining the housing crisis

### 'The White House is a dump'

Donald Trump on why he plays golf so much

### 'Calm down dear it's only a recession'

A placard decorating David Cameron's house

### 'Ignorance'

The reason people don't like the Islamophobic Prevent programme according to top cop Dean Haydon



# Keep health department off contaminated blood inquiry

A FORMER bishop brought in to save the contaminated blood scandal inquiry has said the Department of Health (DoH) should be removed from the inquiry.

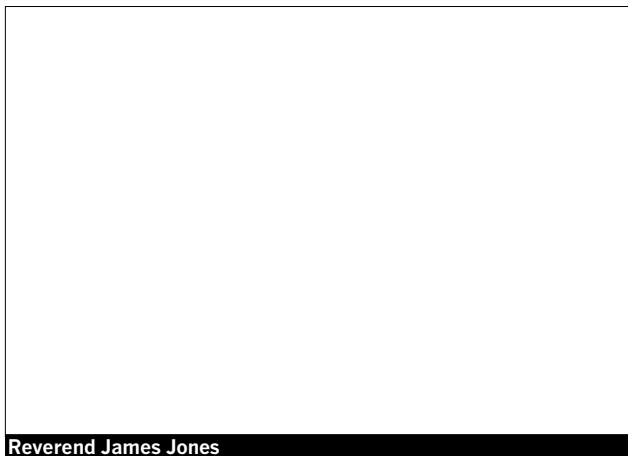
Campaigners, survivors and relatives of people who died as a result of being given contaminated blood had already called on the DoH to be removed.

Now the Reverend James Jones, who chaired the Hillsborough panel inquiry, has said he agrees.

In a letter he wrote, "The DoH cannot be responsible for investigating DoH. It would be an offence to natural justice."

Around 2,500 people died after being given blood or blood products contaminated with HIV and Hepatitis C during the 1970s and 1980s.

Tory health secretary



Reverend James Jones

Jeremy Hunt brought Jones in after an outcry over the DoH's role in the inquiry.

The Contaminated Blood Campaign (CBC) said, "The setting up of the inquiry must be immediately transferred to the Cabinet Office

or another government department.

"CBC will be submitting its demands in regard to the matters which it wants the inquiry to consider.

CBC supports all victims and demands that the inquiry

addresses the infection and other issues of all victims."

Jackie was infected with Hepatitis C in 1983. She told Socialist Worker that the DoH "is at the heart of the scandal and cover up".

"It would be a conflict of interest for it to have a hand in the set-up of the inquiry," she added.

Michelle Tolley was infected with Hepatitis C in 1987. "I want the truth," she told Socialist Worker.

"I want to know why this happened and who gave their consent."

Michelle added that Theresa May could have ordered an inquiry earlier but only did so once her "hand was forced".

"I want my last 30 years back," she said. "All they've given me is a death sentence."

**SUPPORTERS OF the Nazi** Fatherland First group in Norway have demanded that some empty bus seats be "banned" from the country. The Nazis were reacting to a picture of the seats posted on the group's Facebook page. Instead of empty seats, they saw women wearing burqas. "Get them out of our country," said one. "Could be terrorists," said another.

A bus?

**The NHS is denying** wheelchairs to tens of thousands of people in England. A quarter of people referred by GPs to wheelchair services are given no equipment at all. In some areas the figure is three quarters. And 96 percent of areas missed a target to supply wheelchairs within 18 weeks.

## Cops to play classical music to calm London

COPS HAVE unveiled their latest weapon in the fight against crime—Mozart.

PC Adam Weber plans to pump classical music into the Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham in north London.

It's to "calm the atmosphere, relax residents and disperse trouble makers".

The in no way patronising idiot's other scheme is to turn off electricity to some communal areas of the estate. They could "calm the

atmosphere" by not killing people.

**INFORMANTS** have been paid more than £25 million for snitching to police in the past five years. Scotland Yard has spent more than any other force in England and Wales, with its costs over five years topping £9 million.

In total £25,268,798 and 40p has been spent by 43 police forces. That's around £4 million each year.



## Old man retires from luxury to still be rich

TWO RIGHT wing rags gushed over the Duke of Edinburgh last week, after he officially ended his "royal duties"—whatever they were.

Philip met some marines and for reasons unknown told them they "should all be locked up". This was a "pithy aside" according to the Daily Mail, which ran several pages on the big news.

The Mail said Philip's enormous workload "puts younger royals to shame". "Those young royals would benefit greatly from studying the life of this remarkable man and his selfless commitment

Racist with medals

to sustaining the monarchy," it said.

Odd how you can have a "selfless" commitment to sustaining an institution that makes you a millionaire.

According to Mail interviewees, Philip, who looks dead already, "doesn't look ready" to retire. But "only he knows how he feels," one senior royal aide told the Mail.

## Hidden costs of Crossrail

Some of the biggest contracts on the Crossrail project, Europe's largest underground construction scheme, cost up to 255 percent more than they were meant to.

Details of 43 contracts reveal they were awarded at a total cost of about £1.5 billion but the final bill was £2.5 billion.

A contract to build a new London Bond Street station was awarded for £33.2 million but the final cost was £95.3 million.

Andrew Wolstenholme, chief executive of Crossrail, got £946,396.

Crossrail said that some contractors had bid at "unsustainably low values and it was not expected that work would be completed for the contract award price".



## KNOW YOUR ENEMY

No. 56832

**George Freeman**  
Tory MP for Mid Norfolk

● He came up with "Tory Glastonbury" as a way to boost the party's dwindling grassroots support

● He raised £25,000 for a one-day "Conservative ideas festival" next month

● A team of more than 20 people, including 10 MPs, is working on the event, which will be invitation-only. There will be between 150 and 200 attendees

● The event's location is secret (so far) for fear of anti-Tory gatecrashing

## EU pulls racist comic video

THE EUROPEAN Union embassy in Tel Aviv has removed an official EU promotional video featuring Avishai Ivri, an Israeli "comedian".

Ivri has called on Israel to kill "1,000 Arabs" for every Israeli who dies in conflict-related violence and urged that Israel "wipe out Gaza."

Avishai Ivri wrote for a racist Israeli sketch show that portrayed Africans in Israel as monkeys.

Get in touch with Socialist Worker



Email reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Web www.socialistworker.co.uk

Facebook "Socialist Worker (Britain)"

Twitter @socialistworker



Newsdesk  
020 7840 5656  
Circulation  
020 7840 5601



Write to  
Socialist Worker  
PO Box 71327  
London  
SE11 9BW



# Cops' claims unravel over death of Rashan Charles

by SADIE ROBINSON

**THE COPS' pet watchdog, the IPCC, confirmed last week that Rashan Charles did not swallow illegal drugs before he died.**

It said a "mixture of paracetamol and caffeine wrapped in plastic" had been removed from his airway.

Rashan's family said the news "must not detract from our primary concern". "It is to investigate the conduct of those involved in the incident that led to Rashan's death," they said.

Rashan died after being wrestled to the ground in a shop by a police officer in Hackney, east London, on 22 July.

His death sparked angry protests. Soon after his death Scotland Yard said a police officer had "sought to prevent the man from harming himself".

The implication was that the officer was trying to retrieve drugs that Rashan had swallowed. That lie has now fallen apart.

Yet an east London health worker told Socialist Worker that police had told paramedics that Rashan had died of a heart attack after swallowing cocaine.

The health worker, who joined a protest two days after Rashan's death, told Socialist Worker, "I bumped into a paramedic I knew there.

## Swallowed

"He said the paramedics who arrived at the scene were told by police that Rashan had died of a heart attack because he'd swallowed cocaine.

"They hadn't done a post mortem or anything, so how would you possibly know that?"

The health worker said, "I know what it's like. If you work in accident and emergency or the paramedic service, you just get fed this stuff by the police.

"They give you the story and get it



RASHAN'S FATHER (centre) joins a protest outside Stoke Newington police station

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

going. The police make up their narrative straight away and clearly they did in this case."

Egg, an anti-racist campaigner from Hackney, told Socialist Worker, "They murdered him and still they haven't suspended any officer. It's absolutely outrageous.

"The police are out and out liars, every single one of them. They will try and cover this up.

"They said he had swallowed drugs but they haven't found anything on him.

"Even if he did have drugs, is

that a reason for the police to kill someone?"

The police used a similar narrative to explain the death of Edson Da Costa, who died after being stopped by police in Newham, east London, in June (see right).

## Released

It's right that there have been protests to demand truth and justice over these deaths—and that of Darren Cumberbatch in Nuneaton, near Coventry.

Figures released last week showed

that Metropolitan Police officers use force every ten minutes—and that they disproportionately target black people.

Some 36 percent of incidents affected black people, who make up just 13 percent of London's population.

More protests can keep the pressure on the cops.

**What's your story?**  
Email with your ideas  
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

## Mothers speak out at vigil

THE MOTHERS of Mark Duggan and Jermaine Baker demanded an end to police killings on the sixth anniversary of Mark's death in Tottenham last Friday.

Police shot dead Mark and Jermaine in the north London borough in August 2011 and December 2015.

Pamela, Mark's mother, told Socialist Worker, "It's not just about Mark—they're getting away with murder."

Margaret, Jermaine's mother, told Socialist Worker,



Demanding justice in Tottenham

"There is no death penalty in Britain, but the police are doing it."

Pamela and Margaret joined a march of up to 100 people to Tottenham Police Station.

More at [bit.ly/2vwBPkB](http://bit.ly/2vwBPkB)

## Fight for justice for Edson

THE MOTHER of Edson Da Costa has died because of shock after losing her only son, his family has said.

Manuela Araujo collapsed last week.

The family said, "The circumstances surrounding her son's death and the involvement of the police came as a terrible shock and weighed down on her heart."

Edson died after being stopped by police in Newham, east London, in June.

The cops' pet watchdog, the IPCC, is investigating but no officer has been suspended over the death.

●THE Justice4Daz campaign was set to hold a public meeting this Wednesday. Darren Cumberbatch died after coming into contact with police on 10 July. The meeting starts at 6.30pm at the West Indian Community Centre and Social Club, Coventry CV1 3BB

## Breakfast in red

Wake up to Socialist Worker in your inbox every morning.

Sign up to our morning newsletter 'Breakfast in red' and get a fresh article every day.

For news and analysis on the stories that matter go to: [socialistworker.co.uk/](http://socialistworker.co.uk/) subscribe

## Anti-fracking campaigners in the dock

TWELVE PROTESTERS, including three local councillors, were brought before Blackpool Magistrates Court on Monday for resisting firm Cuadrilla's attempt at fracking.

Nine were charged with wilfully obstructing the highway and under anti-union legislation offences relating to impeding Cuadrilla employees' work.

They were arrested on 3 July at the Preston New Road fracking site near Little Plumpton in Lancashire.

Local residents and environmentalists hold daily protests there.

They were the first of nearly 100 due to face charges.

If Cuadrilla is successful it will be the first fracking to go



Protesting at Preston New Road

ahead in Britain since 2011. That year another Cuadrilla rig in the area appeared to cause small earthquakes.

Fracking poses a danger to environmental conditions locally

and adds to global warming. And despite the claims of its supporters, it creates very few jobs.

But despite the consistent backing of the government, the fracking industry is in crisis.

## Provoke

It has faced difficulty getting rigs operational.

This has much to do with the opposition fracking firms provoke wherever they turn up.

Trying to overcome that opposition involves intense and vicious policing.

A Freedom of Information request revealed that cops used force 165 times at Preston New Road in the 19 days from 1 July.





# New group demands Labour back freedom of movement

by NICK CLARK

## BACK STORY

**The Labour Campaign for Free Movement has been launched**

● It calls on Labour's leadership to "defend and extend" freedom of movement in the "context of the debate around Brexit"

● It isn't clear if it backs free movement for everyone or just people in the European Union

● Some right wing Labour MPs are trying to link defending migrants with defending the EU

● They have previously spoken out against free movement

**LABOUR ACTIVISTS, MPs and some trade union leaders have launched a campaign to "defend and extend" freedom of movement for migrants into Britain.**

A new loose grouping, Labour Campaign for Free Movement, calls on Labour's left wing leadership to promise to defend migrants and freedom of movement.

Left wing leader Jeremy Corbyn has previously said that "freedom of movement will end" after Britain leaves the European Union (EU). He has come under pressure from the Labour right.

But the new campaign's founding statement rightly insisted that, "Migrants are not to blame for falling wages, insecurity, bad housing and overstretched public services."

"Labour is the party of all working people—regardless of where they were born."

The statement added, "We fought the last general election arguing against such scapegoating."

This was a reference to Corbyn's speeches at mass rallies during the general election campaign.

He put forward an anti-racist message as part of a radical, left wing campaign that blamed austerity and the rich for the problems in society. This was key to Labour's success in the election.

### Panders

But Corbyn has been under constant pressure from right wingers who insist that Labour can only win an election if it panders to racism.

They see the vote to leave the EU in last year's referendum as a vote for more immigration controls.

Right wing MPs who want Labour to keep Britain in the EU, such as Chuka Umunna, have called for more immigration controls.

Umunna last month defied the Labour leadership to call for Britain to stay in the EU single market, which promotes privatisation and austerity. He had not signed the statement.

But there is a danger that other

MPs and Labour supporters who have supported the statement want to tie defending migrants to defending the EU.

Norwich MP Clive Lewis is the first signature on the statement. He said last November that free movement "hasn't worked for many of the people in this country, where they've been undercut".

Shortly afterwards another signatory, columnist Owen Jones, argued that Labour needs "a programme, and a language" that "chimes with the concerns" about immigration.

Encouraged by Jones, Lewis was reported to be preparing to challenge Corbyn as Labour leader.

Other MPs who signed the statement include David Lammy and Geraint Davies. Both want a second EU referendum.

Labour has to clearly defend migrants and free movement.

But its leadership shouldn't let right wing Labour MPs use solidarity with migrants to push the party into defending the EU bosses' club.

In Milton Regis, Kent, Labour won with more than half the vote. The candidate, Tony Winckless, had lost the seat to Ukip in 2015. This time Ukip was pushed into third place behind the Tories with just 151 votes.

Labour's share of the vote jumped by over 25 percent while Ukip's fell by over 14 percent.

In Worthing, Sussex, Labour won the Marine seat from the

**THE TORIES have seized on the vote to leave the EU to threaten to end freedom of movement**

## Tories trashed in by-elections and votes for racist Ukip party dwindle

by SADIE ROBINSON

**LABOUR WON** four out of six council by-elections held on Thursday of last week. And in two of them—Margate Central and Milton Regis—Jeremy Corbyn's party took the seat from the racist Ukip party.

In Margate Central in Kent Labour's Ian Venables won 454 votes, 57.5 percent, while Ukip was pushed into third place with just 52 votes.

Labour's share of the vote soared by nearly 24 percent. Ukip's vote share plummeted by 25 percent to 6.6 percent.

In Milton Regis, Kent, Labour won with more than half the vote. The candidate, Tony Winckless, had lost the seat to Ukip in 2015. This time Ukip was pushed into third place behind the Tories with just 151 votes.

Labour's share of the vote jumped by over 25 percent while Ukip's fell by over 14 percent.

In Worthing, Sussex, Labour won the Marine seat from the



Protests such as this one in Margate in 2015 have helped to push Ukip back

Tories. Its vote share rose by nearly 28 percent.

And it held the Loughborough Shelthorpe seat in Charnwood, Leicestershire, where its vote share also went up.

The Tories gained a seat from Labour in St Margaret's with St Nicholas in King's Lynn.

And they held a seat in

Sevenoaks, Kent. But even there Labour's vote share rose by over 7 percent.

Some Labour right wingers claimed that having Corbyn as leader would be a disaster for the party. They said his policies are too left wing to win votes.

The latest results are further proof that they are wrong.

## Workers and protesters block Nazi boat in Europe

by DAVE SEWELL

A BOAT hired by far right activists to stop NGOs from rescuing refugees has been turned away from a series of Mediterranean ports. But the Italian authorities are doing the activists' job for them.

A French fascist group hired the boat C-Star for its racist "Defend Europe" stunt.

It was turned away from the Tunisian port of Zarzis last Sunday after fisherfolk vowed to stop it refuelling.

"It is the least we can do given what is happening out in the Mediterranean," said fisherfolk representative Chamseddine Bourassine.

"Muslims and Africans are dying." A port official added, "Us let in racists here? Never."

It's the latest in a series of mishaps in the C-Star's tour of the Mediterranean.

Protesters gathered at Ierapetra in Crete

last week to stop the boat docking. Mayor Theodosis Kalantzakis proclaimed a "big 'no'" to fascism and hailed the "solidarity and hospitality" shown to refugees.

But it isn't just Nazis trying to stop the rescues. Italian authorities seized the NGO rescue ship Iuventa last week. Police said they had "circumstantial evidence" the boat was "being used for activities facilitating illegal immigration".

Meanwhile Italy's government sent the first of its boats into Italian waters to help

the Libyan coastguard turn boats back.

It comes after the operators of three boats refused to sign up to a new code of conduct imposed by the Italian government.

It demands they take anyone they rescue all the way to port, rather than transferring them to other boats and staying in the area.

And it involves a commitment to allow armed police onto the boat.

The outrage that the C-Star has provoked needs to be turned on "Fortress Europe" too.

are in Berlin. "My message is, 'Enough waiting, enough suffering,'" she said.

Around 60,000 refugees have been trapped in Greece for over a year because of a European Union

deal with Turkey.

Recent months have seen protests and riots break out.

Fleeing war and poverty is not a crime. The refugees should be free to live their lives in Europe.

## Open borders to stop deaths

SECURITY guards near the French port of Dunkirk found 26 migrants and refugees in the back of a refrigerated lorry last week.

They included a two year old Iraqi child

with hypothermia. Refrigerated lorries are not safe, and the incident could easily have ended in deaths.

Some 71 people died in a similar vehicle in Austria in 2015.

But the clampdown on the border between France and Britain leaves no safe way to travel.

The border should be opened immediately to prevent more deaths.

**Socialist Worker**  
WHAT WE THINK

## FAT CATS RAKE IT IN—MAKE THEM PAY OUT

SOME newspapers last week reported that Britain's top bosses have suffered a 17 percent pay cut. The real news is that the gap between bosses' and workers' wages is growing.

Top bosses grabbed £129 for every £1 earned by an average worker in Britain last year, figures from the High Pay Centre showed. Twenty years ago the figure was £45.

It would now take the average worker, earning £28,000, 160 years to earn what a FTSE 100 boss earns in one year. That's 20 years longer than it was just two years ago.

And for those on the Tories' shoddy National Living Wage it would take 316 years.

Sir Martin Sorrell, head of advertising firm WPP, grabbed a few million less than he did in 2015. But he still tops the list of Britain's biggest fat cats, with a pay package of over £48 million in 2016.

It would take the average worker 1,718 years to earn what he "earned" last year. And pay for many other bosses is soaring.

Albert Manifold from the building materials firm CRH saw

his income nearly double last year. Arnold Donald, from cruise firm Carnival, nearly quadrupled his pay package from £6 million to £22 million.

The average pay package for a FTSE 100 boss was £4.53 million in 2016. In 2010 it was £4.13 million.

So for all the bleating about bosses' pay cut, they have got richer since the Tories came to office. The Tories have consistently cut taxes on top bosses' pay and profits.

Some bosses' "rewards" come in the form of perks. For Sorrell, this includes a "housing allowance paid when the executive uses their own accommodation when

travelling outside of their home country".

Sorrell has previously whined about the prospect of a cap on executive pay. "We've always been in favour of pay for performance and now we're going to have even that under threat," he complained earlier this year.

He said that, if a cap was brought in, he would worry about "where talent would go".

Presumably he doesn't have the same concern about the impact of the pay cap in the public sector, which the Tories are determined to continue.

Experienced and skilled staff are being driven out of key services that ordinary people actually need, such as the NHS.

And while the bosses rake it in, most still refuse to promise to pay all workers at least the Living Wage. Nearly three quarters of the 100 FTSE companies are not accredited by the Living Wage Foundation for paying the Living Wage to all their employees in Britain.

It's a lie to say we don't have the money to properly fund services or give workers a pay rise.

The high pay figures are another reason to build the fight to make the bosses and the Tories pay out.

**While the bosses rake it in, most still refuse to pay all workers the Living Wage**

## THEY TOLERATE TYRANTS

POLITICIANS AND pundits have whipped themselves up into moral outrage over Venezuelan "dictator"—or rather, elected president—Nicolas Maduro.

Theresa May's office called on Maduro to release political opponents and respect "human rights" and the "rule of law".

She is a hypocrite. May's government is pally with plenty of tyrannical and repressive regimes. British ally and business partner Saudi Arabia is preparing to

execute 14 people for protests in 2011-12. They were part of the Arab Spring, a mass revolt against dictators and imperialism.

This doesn't bother the British government.

The Saudi regime obtained confessions from some protesters through torture. Training by British police could have helped Saudi security forces arrest them.

Armed with British weaponry, the same Saudi regime is bombing civilians in Yemen.

Lib Dem leader Vince Cable

demanding the left end its "infatuation with the Venezuelan regime".

Cable was Shell Oil's chief economist in the 1990s, when the multinational corporation was cosying up to Nigeria's military regime.

Never mind rounding up political opponents, the regime was murdering them.

Our rulers quickly dump democracy and human rights when it suits them. The left should take no lectures from them.

## Get Socialist Worker every week

If you liked this issue of Socialist Worker, why not subscribe?

You'll receive 20 pages of news, analysis and political debate every week for just £5 a month

For more details phone 020 7840 5601 or email [circ@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:circ@socialistworker.co.uk)





## ANALYSIS

RAYMIE KIERNAN



## It's anger that fuels votes for alternative

**THE WHOLE political establishment and the British mass media told us Jeremy Corbyn was unelectable.**

So it's not surprising to learn that more voters thought he wasn't electable. Believing the Labour leader couldn't win the general election also made people less inclined to vote for his party.

These are just two points drawn from the largest survey of voter opinion, the 30,000-sample British Election Study (BES).

An equally unsurprising fact was that people were more likely to back Corbyn and Labour when the party seemed more likely to win.

This was the shift identified during the campaign in one of the BES analysis papers.

It said that "when people's perceptions of Labour's chances of winning a majority increased, they were more likely to switch to Labour if they were not previously a Labour voter, and were more likely to stay loyal to Labour if they were previously".

This backs the argument that Corbyn's mass rallies encouraged confidence. It also undermines the Labour right which desperately seeks to downplay the enthusiasm for a left wing manifesto. Some have even suggested that people voted for Corbyn because they didn't think he was likely to become prime minister.

It's almost ten years since the beginning of the financial crash. The ruling class exploited that crash to enrich themselves at the expense of working class living standards and our public services.

Is it really any wonder that people backed a manifesto that sought to reverse some of the worst effects of that crusade for the richest in society?

Deep dissatisfaction with the system can find an electoral expression when people feel that a radical alternative could make a real difference to their lives.

That's what fuelled the surge for independence in Scotland in 2014. That gave Britain's rulers the fright of their lives and transformed the fortunes of the Scottish National Party (SNP).

### Tremors

The tremors from that earthquake continue to significantly shape the political landscape and complicate the fallout from the European Union (EU) referendum last summer.

Another BES paper analyses the interaction of the two referendums to try and explain the outcome of the general election in Scotland.

It found that 40 percent of "Yes/Leave" voters who backed the SNP in the 2015 general election switched to other parties in 2017. Most switched to the Tories or Labour in roughly equal proportions.

The argument is that "just as Labour's position on the independence referendum lost them votes to the SNP, many 2015 SNP voters were driven away by the party's strong pro-remain stance".

The sight of the Tories returning 13 MPs not only shocked people but also punctured the myth that Scotland is more progressive than England.

In mainland Scotland there were six council areas with higher than average votes to both reject independence and leave the EU.

These are all generally more rural and wealthy areas that the Tories have held in the past and, particularly in the north east, have been the SNP's traditional base.

But as the nationalist party has put its left face to the fore, its "Tartan Tory" support has dwindled.

The Scottish local elections foretold the Tories' Westminster gains, again particularly in the north east where the SNP suffered heavy losses.

The paper argues that the Tories' ability to capture almost as many Remain voters—who also rejected independence—as Labour was key to boosting their vote share.

It found that "a large number of No/Remain voters more closely identified with 'No' than with 'Remain'".

It's yet more ammunition against Labour's Scottish party leader Kezia Dugdale.

She encouraged votes for "better placed" parties to land a blow on the SNP rather than fight for Corbyn's left wing manifesto.

A COURT artist's impression of the convicted men

# 'Serious questions' remain over Birmingham terror trial

by SADIE ROBINSON

**THREE MEN from Birmingham and a man from Stoke-on-Trent were convicted last month of plotting terror attacks.**

Naweed Ali, Khobaib Hussain, Mohibur Rahman and Tahir Aziz were jailed for life.

Gareth Peirce, the lawyer for Naweed Ali and Khobaib Hussain, has said serious questions remain about the case.

The judge, Justice Globe, had instructed undercover police officers giving evidence during the trial not to communicate with one another.

### Deleted

But deleted text messages sent by one undercover officer known as Vincent showed that officers were in contact with one another.

Gareth said, "Constant messages revealing meetings arranged between officers at lay-bys on motorways and in the bars of hotels near the Old Bailey whilst they were in the midst of giving witness evidence in court must be sufficient to shock any court as to the propriety and integrity of the evidence being given and the reliability and credibility of the witness himself."

"Denial of contact by the central witness must reasonably cause doubt about the

very case itself." One deleted text from Vincent read, "I'm determined to put in an Oscar performance when I get in that box." Another read, "We're getting older but not to [sic] old to twirl them and put them away for a long time ;-)."

The defendants claimed that police had planted evidence that was used against them. The judge and the jury accepted the police version of events.

Gareth said the defendants had been under "constant surveillance" for more than



Lawyer Gareth Peirce

a month before they were arrested. She asked how they could have accessed the items found in Naweed Ali's car—an improvised pipe bomb with gunpowder inside, shotgun cartridges and a meat cleaver—when under surveillance.

There was no evidence of the men obtaining, purchasing, handling or knowing of the items in the car.

As part of an undercover courier firm, Vincent would park Ali's car while he made deliveries.

### Blunderbuss

Gareth said, "One deleted text showed Andy [another undercover cop] referring to a photograph of Vincent with a "blunderbuss", followed by an acknowledgement by another witness that he was a firearms buff who would undoubtedly, as the owner of a shotgun licence, have easy access to shotgun cartridges."

There were fingerprints found on the items in the car. But they could not be checked against Vincent's because there was no record of his fingerprints on the police fingerprint system.

She said that a notebook that was said to have been filled in contemporaneously "contained a mismatch of sequence of events".

"It could never have been contemporaneously recorded during the undercover operation," she said.

## Secret evidence in case

**PART OF the trial was held in secret in the interests of "national security".**

And undercover police could refuse to answer questions in court by claiming that to answer "would constitute a risk to national security".

Former Guantanamo Bay detainee Moazzam Begg, who is now director of the Cage campaign group, compared the case to the trial of the six people wrongly convicted for the 1974 Birmingham pub bombing.

"The Court of Appeal

accepted that police had fabricated and suppressed exculpatory evidence and ruled the convictions 'unsafe and unsatisfactory,' Moazzam said.

"Had the police in the case of the Birmingham Six also enjoyed anonymity it is reasonable to conclude their victims would have remained in prison."

"There must be an inquiry into how the police were able to escape scrutiny in a case filled with so many lies, inconsistencies and cover up."

# ‘We’ve got no faith in the Grenfell fire inquiry’

Tenants organise as landlords and Tories refuse to act on the lessons of the disaster, writes Alistair Farrow

**AS THE Grenfell Tower fire inquiry stopped taking submissions, survivors and campaigners slammed its narrow mandate.**

Chris Imafidon, a volunteer in the west London area where the disaster took place, told Socialist Worker, “I have no faith in the inquiry.”

The inquiry can only make “recommendations”. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and several social landlords’ organisations called for an inquiry with a broader remit.

Corbyn said, “An inquiry with narrow terms of reference risks failing to learn all the lessons of this tragedy.”

Over 300 submissions have been made to the inquiry. None are likely to come from undocumented migrants. Immigration minister Brandon Lewis granted only a year’s reprieve from deportation if they come forward.

“Their so-called amnesty is a joke,” said Chris. “If you have the threat of deportation hanging over your head you’re not going to come forward.” He added, “Theresa May doesn’t care about the people who died in that tower.”

Survivors still wait to be housed.

## Waiting

Residents on walkways surrounding the tower have been told to join long waiting lists if they don’t want to move back into their houses.

People whose neighbours died in the fire should not be forced to live next to the coffin of Grenfell.

Those who agree to stay put get £5,000 “to acknowledge the impact of the fire” plus redecoration and professional cleaning services.

But if residents don’t want to move back, they “will be able to look for permanent housing through the council’s allocations and lettings process,” read a letter seen by Socialist Worker.

Moyra Samuels of the Justice for Grenfell campaign said, “The Tories are trying to wear people out with endless meetings, but meanwhile they’re ignoring people’s needs.”

Residents across Britain are

## BACK STORY

**The Grenfell Tower in west London caught fire on 14 June**

- Police say around 80 people were killed, and their deaths could be corporate manslaughter
- Residents in the tower were mostly working class and black
- Some had repeatedly tried to raise safety concerns with landlords and the Tory council
- Tories ignored pleas to improve safety after a fire in south London
- Two months after the fire, many survivors are still homeless

having to fight to get their landlords to take their concerns seriously after the fire.

Some 90 buildings with the same cladding and insulation combination as Grenfell Tower have failed new tests by the Building Research Establishment.

The government’s response has been to let landlords off the hook, saying only that they should “put in place a plan to review the cladding system”.

City West Housing Trust in Manchester said, “We will not be starting” removing the materials.

Council tenants in north Manchester have been organising to put pressure on management organisation Northwards Housing.

Fiona from the Hamerton Action Group (HAG) told Socialist Worker, “We’ve had a catalogue of concerns ignored. The campaign was set up after Grenfell because of the lack of information.”

“In 2013 new cladding was put up, we want to know if we’re safe.”

The group has leafletted residents and written to councillors and MPs—though only one has so far replied. Northwards is now “considering” having the cladding tested.

Fiona said, “It wasn’t until we pushed back that we started to see results. We just want the cladding tested—they’re not doing anything and I want to know why.”

## Trade unions



UNITE UNION leader Len McCluskey joined strikers marching for pay last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

# We still need a pay rise, says TUC—but we’ll need a bigger fight to get it

THE TUC union federation has called a major lobby and rally of parliament on 17 October “to tell our MPs that Britain’s dedicated public servants need a pay rise”.

It is a welcome development—and long overdue.

The TUC said, “For seven years, government has restricted public sector pay rises to less than inflation—or nothing at all.

“But prices haven’t stopped rising in that time, and inflation means nurses, firefighters, and other public servants’ wages are worth over £2,000 less than they were when the coalition government started in 2010.”

## Protest

The Westminster rally, in Parliament Square, will come soon after the protest at the Tory party conference in Manchester, called by the People’s Assembly.

The Midlands TUC has called a series of rallies (see box) under the banner of “Britain still needs a pay rise”. Other regions should organise actions too.

These are an opportunity to build momentum and push for serious industrial action over pay.

The government imposed a

## REGIONAL RALLIES—MIDLANDS

**Britain still needs a pay rise—rallies called by the TUC. Events in other regions may be announced later. Find out more at [tuc.org.uk/events](http://tuc.org.uk/events)**

- Beeston, 8 September
- Stafford, 13 September
- Worcester, 14 September
- Loughborough, 12 September
- Stoke-on-Trent, 16 September

- Clay Cross, 20 September
- Corby, 21 September
- Mansfield, 30 September
- Telford, 23 September
- Derby, 10 October
- Stourbridge, 11 October
- Warwick, 12 October
- Lincoln, 13 October
- Northampton, 21 October

two-year public sector pay freeze in 2011/12.

This was followed by a 1 percent pay cap until 2015/16, later extended for a further four years in the 2015 Spending Review.

According to Britain’s largest union, Unison, public sector pay has risen by just 4.4 percent between 2010 and 2016 while the cost of living rose by 22 percent.

This means that the average worker became £17,962 poorer over that time. Working class people and services have paid too much for the bosses’ crisis and Tory austerity. We need union leaders to build united resistance.

A coalition of unions in London

had already called a march through Whitehall on 12 October against the Tory pay cap.

It’s a shame the TUC didn’t join forces with them and boost that initiative.

It should also put out a call for the mobilisation to the Tory party conference on 1 October.

The Tories should be facing intense pressure over pay. We need more and bigger protests, and an autumn of discontent to smash the pay cap.



## On other pages...

Strikers in three pay disputes join forces in London march >>Page 19





# Coup threat hangs over Venezuelan president

The right wing opposition wants to violently roll back reforms made by the left, writes **Dave Sewell**

**A RAID on a Venezuelan military base last Sunday raised the threat of a military coup or civil war. Yet in Britain it has largely been used as an excuse to attack Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.**

As well as Tories and Lib Dems, much of the bile came from the Labour right.

MP John Spellar said Corbyn should “recognise the failure of the regime”. He is part of a new all-party parliamentary group on Venezuela—despite never having raised Venezuela in parliament.

Corbyn meekly condemned violence on “all sides” but stood by his previous support for Venezuela’s left wing presidents, first Hugo Chavez and now Nicolas Maduro.

“I gave the support of many people around the world for the principle of a government that was dedicated towards reducing inequality and improving the life chances of the poorest people,” he said.

Maduro’s presidency has been an economic catastrophe, in large part due to collapsing oil prices.

## Coup

But a successful coup by the right would make things far worse for workers and the poor. Their attempts to violently roll back the left’s reforms must be opposed.

Sunday’s attack took place in Paramacay at Venezuela’s most important base for armoured vehicles.

Men in military fatigues released a video declaring their “rebellion”, and seized weapons from the base—though seven of their number were arrested and two killed.

They called on soldiers to take up arms against the government. Chillingly, they warned anyone who remained loyal to Maduro to “consider yourself a military target and assume the consequences”.

Their leader was former captain Juan Caguariapano, wanted for treason since 2014 when he supported an

anti-government demonstration.

The authorities say they also included people linked to the Venezuelan right and the US and Colombian governments.

## Rogue

The attack comes two months after rogue police used a helicopter to attack the Supreme Court building. It also follows months of right wing protests and violence, including roadblocks and assassinations.

Opposition leaders have stoked violence on the streets.

They organised an unofficial referendum in protest against Maduro’s summoning of a Constituent Assembly to rewrite the constitution.

Its questions included whether the army should “defend” the current constitution and “back the decisions” of the right-held National Assembly.

This effectively means refusing to recognise Maduro’s Constituent Assembly or its decisions.

The US and its allies have also refused to recognise the Constituent Assembly. They have a record for rapidly endorsing coups in Latin America.

Maduro’s response to Venezuela’s deepening crisis has been to give the army more powers—a trend the Constituent Assembly is set to continue. But the military is never a reliable ally of workers and the poor.

**PRESIDENT MADURO’S** Constituent Assembly has been attacked by Venezuela’s right wing opposition

## UNITED STATES

# Trump backs Republican senators’ plan to slash legal immigration in half

**RACIST, SEXIST** US president Donald Trump stepped up his assault on ordinary people last week by announcing plans to cut legal immigration figures in half.

One million people currently come to the US each year.

A bill proposed by senators Tom Cotton and David Perdue, and endorsed by Trump, would see the introduction of a points-based immigration system if passed.

Included in the bill are details of the conditions for entry. You get more points for speaking English.

Similar rules have been used to reinforce racism in states such as Australia.

## Families

The bill would also get rid of migrants’ right to bring their families to the US after them. This is the measure which is estimated will cut immigration in half within a decade.

The changes will force more people to try to get into the US by other means. The right has tried to argue that “higher quality” migrants will benefit the US.

But the racist divisions the bill is

designed to stoke will only benefit the people at the top of that society.

Claims that low skilled workers are a downward pull on wages are becoming more prevalent.

Trump’s Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents ramped up their intimidation last week. They arrested 33 “criminal aliens, illegal re-entrants and immigration violators” in west Michigan in a four-day operation.

Meanwhile, Trump continued his right wing agenda by rolling back restrictions on mining for coal on government land.

The US government controls 643 million acres of land, an area six times the size of the huge state of California.

## More on line

Trump ramps up tensions in Asia, go to [bit.ly/2hGvY6w](https://bit.ly/2hGvY6w)



**On other pages...**

Maduro, struggle and the left  
>>Pages 14&15

## We can be critical of art

KEN MULLER'S letter (Socialist Worker, 2 July) regarding the film Dunkirk raises some interesting questions about what socialists should say about films, music or art in general.

He is right to say that we should not approach them simply as historical documents.

However we do need to see works of art as products of a particular history. The economic development of a society at a particular time will be the basis for the ideas of that time.

Medieval society, where there was a strict hierarchy of place and little social mobility produced certain ways of explaining that. Art came under the patronage of the wealthy and confirmed them in their place.

As the way society produced wealth changed, and people lived differently, so did ideas and the reflection of those ideas.

Art was changed forever by methods of reproduction that meant it was accessible to millions of people.

Good art bears the imprint of its historical period most clearly.

This means that the work can carry an explicitly conservative message but still be great art, like many Hollywood films.

It also means that things that may be enjoyable or well produced could be criticised by socialists for obscuring the social truth of the period.

What we need is, not a historical view of art, but an understanding of history that enables us to explain the forms, style and meaning of a piece of art.

**Dave Gilchrist**  
Berlin



Just a thought...

## Hypocritical meat eaters

WHY ARE people outraged at the picture of 100 dead foxes posted on Vinnie Jones' Twitter account?

Killing chickens, cows, pigs, lambs and fish for food is no different to killing foxes for fun.

The only way to stop inflicting suffering and death on animals is to go vegan.

**Mark Richards**  
Brighton

## Scrap the royal family

EMOTIVE STORIES about Princess Diana and about scrounger Prince Philip as he "retires" are appearing across the media at a convenient time.

The Grenfell Tower fire should be further up the news agenda. So should the news that the queen is set to receive a £6 million pay rise and a £370 million handout to repair Buckingham Palace.

Scrap the royals and use the money to fund public services.

**Kris Hedges**  
Cardiff

## Keep Carnival in North Ken

MINISTER FOR London Greg Hands has called for Notting Hill Carnival to be moved because it is inappropriate to stage it "in the near proximity of a major national disaster".

The Tories have been trying to end carnival for years because it is run by ordinary people.

We need to fight to keep it in the local area.

**Graham**  
West London

## The peasantry and workers

JOHN MAROT said there are few lessons to be learnt for the struggle today from studying Russian peasants during the revolution (Socialist Worker, 26 July).

The way capitalism developed in Russia meant the revolution's fate was ultimately tied up with it spreading to other countries.

The reason to study the Russian Revolution, despite differing conditions today, is that it is still the world's only successful workers' revolution.

**Chris Newlove**  
North London

# South African workers still have unfinished business

FIVE YEARS ago on 16 August South African police shot dead 34 striking miners at the Lonmin Corporation's Marikana mine.

It confirmed that while the defeat of apartheid was a great victory, secured mainly by the struggle of black workers, big business is still firmly in charge.

The struggle for justice for Marikana continues.

The widows of the Marikana workers want to get to the bottom of what happened and want to receive decent compensation.

They want those responsible to be brought to justice.

Today miners and the poorer people of Marikana still don't have access to water. Lonmin admits

that 13,500 Marikana miners lack formal accommodation and are living in squatter camps.

There is black majority rule in South Africa and the African National Congress (ANC) is in government.

But the ANC will back South African capitalism without any reservation.

The massacre did not stop the strike, which was successful and inspired many others.

Finally, what Marikana reveals is that deputy president Cyril Ramaphosa is not a credible alternative to Jacob Zuma's ANC government.

Ramaphosa is usually portrayed as smooth talking, incisive and

sophisticated in comparison to the devious and bumbling Zuma.

However, the inquiry into Marikana revealed that he was a key mover and heavily implicated in the events that led to the massacre of the miners.

As former president of the National Union of Miners, he was a key negotiator in bringing an end to apartheid.

He is now hugely rich and was on the board of Lonmin at the time of the killings.

The most important lesson of Marikana is that South African workers have unfinished business to take care of.

**Bruce George**  
North London

## Corbyn should promise to dump student debt

THERESA MAY has called on Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn to apologise on his apparent U-turn on a pledge to abolish student debt, claiming he misled young people to vote for Labour.

It's true that Corbyn never promised to abolish student debt. But we have to ask why he hasn't.

At the time of the banking crisis, £850 billion was found to save capitalism from itself.

Yet when working class people are handed huge debts there isn't the money

to help them. May is worried about the effect Corbynism will have on the young working class people in the country.

We have the ability to create change by standing up together against the Tories and fighting back.

Corbyn should push back against the Tories and should go further with his plans to abolish student debt. The money exists, it's just in the hands of the wrong people.

**Bekah Patrick**  
Essex

## Protesting over housing can get results

ON 24 July the Focus E15 housing campaign group held a protest outside the Newham council housing service in east London.

The demo was really good—people stopped and got involved.

The building was shut down. The people inside were shyly peeking through windows.

Some were even openly laughing.

They need to realise that Newham mayor Robin Wales won't protect them. They could be in our position at any time. Later on we got a



Focus E15 out campaigning

phone call from someone from the council trying to sort a woman's housing problems.

It shows that direct action has an effect. But we still don't have the outcome we want. It's

important to have groups to support, educate and bring people in need together.

Nobody else really does that—the government definitely doesn't and homeless charities often duck the difficult political arguments around housing.

**Elina Garrick**  
Focus E15 campaign

March of the towers—resistance in the East End!  
Saturday, 12 August at 12pm  
Ferrier Point, Forty Acre Lane,  
Canning Town, E16  
[bit.ly/2vobCof](http://bit.ly/2vobCof)





FASCIST GANGS had been marauding around Lewisham for weeks...



They hoped to build numbers for the coming National Front march...



But thousands, black and white, defiantly stood in their way...



They battered their way into the fascist march...



...and split it in two, capturing National Front banners and bloodying their marchers

# LEWISHAM '77

## WHEN WE SMASHED THE NATIONAL FRONT

Forty years ago this week thousands of protesters blocked a Nazi march in south east London—and made history. Socialist Worker at the time reported that the Nazis “got the hammering of their lives” in Lewisham. **Sadie Robinson** tells the story

**T**HE NATIONAL Front (NF) tried to march through Clifton Rise in Lewisham, where many black people lived, on 13 August 1977. They were feeding off a broader climate of racism.

Earlier that year police had arrested dozens of young black people in Deptford, Lewisham, and charged several with conspiracy to steal. When the Lewisham 21 defence campaign protested, the Nazis attacked it. The NF claimed to be marching against “black crime” as politicians and the press whipped up a racist scare around “mugging”.

John Lockwood was on the committee of the All Lewisham Campaign Against Racism and Fascism in 1977 and a Socialist Workers Party (SWP) member. John explained that at the time “it felt like the media, the police and the fascists were all attacking black people”.

People organised to push the fascists back despite opposition from much of the left. John said, “For years we’d been opposing the Nazis, kind of

marching alongside them and shouting at them. But in April 1977 a bunch of young black boys lashed a load of shoes from a shop into an NF march in north London. It produced mayhem.

“It was clear from that moment that, with greater audacity and double the numbers, we could move from opposing the Nazis to physically stopping them. So that became our objective.”

Paul Holborow was the east London organiser of the SWP in 1977. “Lewisham was an absolute



**We argued it was essential to be alongside black people in Clifton Rise**

provocation by the NF,” he told Socialist Worker. “It was a culmination of around five years of activity against them. The International Socialists, the forerunner of the SWP, was always at the centre of that activity.”

Harold Wilson was a schoolboy in Lewisham at the time. “I will never forget the atmosphere at school the Friday before the march,” he told a meeting at Marxism Festival 2017.

“Black people were incensed that they should dare to march through Clifton Rise.”

Maeve Landman was teaching in Lewisham. “There was a high percentage of black kids at the school,” she told Socialist Worker.

“I was outraged that the NF could come to where they lived and demonstrate their racist filth. It was like someone shitting on my doorstep.”

Harold said a previous attack by Nazis on a Lewisham 21 protest had hardened up a determination to resist. “They threw acid on one girl, they broke the arm of another girl,” he said. “After that there was no turning back.”

But not everyone saw the need to

confront the Nazis. “The Communist Party (CP) wanted to oppose the fascists from the other side of the borough,” John explained.

“We spent six months arguing that it was essential to be alongside black people in Clifton Rise. They called us adventurists. The local CP referred to us as the ‘bring a bottle’ party. But increasingly the SWP was taken seriously by black people.”

On the day a compromise position saw a big meeting at Ladywell Fields, about two miles from Clifton Rise. After speeches a march was supposed to disassemble halfway to Clifton Rise.

SWP members leafleted the march and argued that it should continue to join other protesters at Clifton Rise. “There were about 4-5,000 people on the march in the morning,” said John. “And the vast majority came to Clifton Rise.”

A Communist Party leaflet read, “We totally oppose the provocative march planned by the SWP.” Yet many CP members joined it.

Mounted cops led the NF march. Maeve said, “Police protected the

Nazis. It was a heavily charged day and at times it was frightening. But I was amazed to see so many black people on a demonstration. And when the Nazis got to Clifton Rise all hell broke loose.”

Police used riot shields for the first time in Britain. Maeve described how one officer threatened to do her harm “if he wasn’t wearing his uniform”. “They were particularly aggressive,” she said.

But police failed to stop anti-fascists breaking through police lines and cutting the Nazi march in half.

Paul recalled, “The Nazis started marching confidently down Clifton Rise. The air became darkened with missiles thrown at them—fences, gates, dustbins and so on. “And suddenly the Nazis were scurrying from doorway to doorway to avoid the missiles. Their march was broken up.”

The protest forced the NF to flee and the impact was enormous. “People felt absolutely elated,” said Paul. “It was the first time since Cable Street in 1936 that we’d given the Nazis a bloody good hiding.”



Police, who had guarded the National Front march, wanted revenge on the anti-fascists and ran amok

Maeve said, “Lewisham gave enormous confidence to people like me, who were close to the movement but not then heavily involved.

“I think Lewisham was the entry point for me into activism. It ultimately drew me into the SWP. It was also a sharp reminder of what the stakes were if you didn’t get organised.”

The success wasn’t automatic, or easy. The NF was not some tiny, irrelevant group. Earlier that year it had won over 119,000 votes in the Greater London Council elections, beating the



**The Daily Mirror said the Socialist Workers Party was as bad as the National Front**

Liberals for third place in 33 seats. It had branches in some workplaces. There was a spate of racist attacks.

But Lewisham marked a turning point. Paul recalled, “I went into the SWP headquarters on the Monday after the protest. The phones never stopped ringing.

“People said, ‘We don’t agree with all your politics, but we need a broad, mass campaign against the Nazis’. We responded to that.”

“The legacy of Lewisham was the Anti Nazi League (ANL). It meant a generation of anti-racists and anti-fascists was committed to preventing the Nazis from entering the mainstream.”

This united front was key to destroying the Nazis’ support. As former NF organiser Martin Webster admitted, “The sheer presence of the ANL had made it impossible to get NF members on the streets, had dashed recruitment and cut away at their vote.”

The Battle of Lewisham should be celebrated. Yet some denounced it.

Police rioted in Lewisham after the protest, beating and arresting anti-fascists (see right). The Times



Maeve Landman in 1977



John Lockwood on his release

## Teacher jailed for demo still carries the scars

JOHN LOCKWOOD was the only protester jailed as a result of the Battle of Lewisham. He’s still an active socialist today but was just 26 years old and a newly qualified teacher at the time.

He spoke to Socialist Worker about the experience and the lengths the state went to criminalise anti-fascists.

“The Nazis had been sent away because the police conceded that they couldn’t break through. We’d held the ground at the Clock Tower for about two hours. The police then rioted against local people.

“They ran me over with a motorcycle, arrested me and put me in a riot van. They spent several minutes climbing on the seats in the van and trying to jump onto my head. They were intent on doing as much damage as they possibly could.

“They broke the bones in my hand as I tried to defend myself and I was charged with assault of an unknown member of the Metropolitan Police force.

“They never named or produced this officer. And in court we proved that no such incident had occurred. The whole thing was fabricated. But I was charged under public order legislation which was introduced allegedly to fight fascism in the 1930s. It meant I didn’t have the right to a jury trial. So I was tried by a judge and two magistrates.

“Prior to the cases coming up, there was a conference of magistrates. They were told in no uncertain terms that the SWP was responsible for violence at Lewisham. They were told the SWP was a criminal organisation and needed to be dealt with very harshly.

“I was in jail for three months. Two fascist screws came to see me and implied they would do me harm. I was very, very intimidated by this.

“Deptford SWP branch worked night and day to try and support me. They got Lewisham MP Chris Price to meet me in prison. That was extremely helpful because it meant the Nazi screws had to back off.

**Devastating**  
“I’d been in the SWP for four years and this was a baptism of fire. I was unable to speak about it for about ten years. It was absolutely devastating. I thought I was going to die in prison. It was very, very grim.

“When I got out I was banned from teaching. An SWP member on my union’s executive committee negotiated a deal whereby I could teach north of the river. I’m still banned from teaching south of the river Thames.

“I managed to find work but right to the end of my career this never went away. It was problematic all my life.”

**BATTLE OF LEWISHAM**  
FORTY YEARS ON

● March from 1pm, Saturday 12 August, Clifton Rise, London SE14 6JW  
● Love Music Hate Racism gig, 7pm, New Cross Inn, London SE14 6AS

Supported by Unite Against Fascism and Love Music Hate Racism

**#Lewisham77**  
SUNDAY 13th AUGUST

Part of a weekend of free events, including live music, talks, exhibitions and screenings commemorating the 40th anniversary of the battle against the fascist National Front in 1977  
sites.gold.ac.uk/battle-of-lewisham

Supported by Goldsmiths College, Lewisham Council & Love Music Hate Racism



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state — a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

### BARNSELEY

**What would socialism look like?**

Thu 17 Aug, 7pm,  
YMCA, Blucher St,  
S70 1AP

### BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

**Does privilege theory explain oppression?**

Wed 16 Aug, 7pm,  
Birmingham LGBT Centre,  
38/40 Holloway Circus,  
B1 1EQ

### BOLTON

**A rebel's guide to Malcolm X**

Thu 17 Aug, 7pm,  
Bolton Socialist Club,  
16 Wood St (off  
Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

### BRIGHTON

**Capitalism in crisis — socialism or barbarism**

Thu 17 Aug, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Ship St, BN1 1AF

### BRISTOL

**The Second World War — myth and reality**

Wed 16 Aug, 7.30pm,  
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,  
BS1 4QA

### CAMBRIDGE

**Non-binary oppression and its roots**

Thu 17 Aug, 7.30pm,  
River Lane Centre,  
River Lane, CB5 8HP

### CHESTERFIELD

**Pride, politics and protest — fighting for LGBT+ liberation**

Thu 17 Aug, 7.30pm,  
Chesterfield Library,  
New Beetwell St,  
S40 1QN

### ESSEX

**Soviets or parliament — socialism and democracy**

Thu 7 Sep, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Rainsford Rd, Chelmsford,  
CM1 2QL

### HUDDERSFIELD

**Trotsky and the workers' revolution in Russia 1917**

Wed 16 Aug, 6.30pm,  
Brian Jackson House,  
2 New North Parade (near  
both train and bus stations),  
HD1 5JP

# 70 years since the Partition of India — what is the legacy for today?

### EDINBURGH

Wed 16 Aug, 7.30pm,  
The Strathie,  
17 Iona St,  
EH6 8SG

### LONDON: HACKNEY

Thu 17 Aug, 7.30pm,  
The Round Chapel,  
2 Powerscroft Rd  
(corner Lower Clapton Rd),  
E5 0PU

### LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

**Engels — a socialist for today**

Thu 17 Aug, 7pm,  
The Swarthmore  
Education Centre,  
2-7 Woodhouse Square,  
LS3 1AD

### LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

**The origins of Notting Hill Carnival**

Thu 17 Aug, 7.30pm,  
The Pepperpot Centre,  
1a Thorpe Close,  
Ladbroke Grove  
(very close to the  
station), W10 5XL

### LONDON: BRIXTON

**Police, racism and the state**

Wed 16 Aug, 7pm,  
Vida Walsh Centre,  
2b Saltoun Rd  
(near Effra Rd, facing  
Windrush Square),  
SW2 1EP

### LONDON: HARINGEY

**The united front — Trotsky's theory and practice**

Wed 16 Aug, 7.30pm,  
St John Vianney  
Church Hall,  
386 West Green Rd  
(corner Vincent Rd),  
N15 3QH

### LONDON: NEWHAM

**The tragedy of Syria**

Wed 30 Aug, 7pm,  
Stratford Advice Arcade,  
107-109 The Grove  
(next to Morrisons  
car park),  
E15 1HP

### LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

**From Stalin to Putin — Russia today**

Wed 16 Aug, 7pm,  
Oxford House,  
Derbyshire St  
(opposite Bethnal  
Green Rd Tesco),  
E2 6HG

### MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

**What kind of education system do we want and how can we fight for it?**

Thu 17 Aug, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St (opposite  
Manchester Central Library),  
M2 5NS

### NEWCASTLE

**What can we learn from the writings and life of George Orwell?**

Thu 17 Aug, 7pm,  
Broadacre House,  
Market St,  
NE1 6HQ

### NORWICH

**Syria — revolution, counter-revolution & civil war**

Thu 17 Aug, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place, NR2 2SA

### OXFORD

**150 years since Capital — the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx**

Wed 16 Aug, 7.30pm,  
Restore, Manzil Way (off  
Cowley Rd), OX4 1YH

### PORTSMOUTH

**Climate change — how can we save the planet?**

Wed 16 Aug, 7.30pm,  
Somerstown Community  
Centre, River's St, PO5 4EZ

### SCARBOROUGH

**Socialism and the environment**

Wed 16 Aug, 7.30pm,  
Tap and Spile,  
94 Falsgrave Rd, YO12 5AZ

### SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

**The lost revolution — Germany 1918-1923**

Thu 17 Aug, 7pm,  
Victoria Hall,  
Methodist Church,  
Norfolk St, S1 2JB

### WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

**What would socialism be like?**

Wed 16 Aug, 7.30pm,  
Wild Bytes Cafe,  
Darlington St, WV1 4HW

### YORK

**After Grenfell — the fight for social housing**

Wed 16 Aug, 7.30pm,  
Sea Horse Hotel,  
4 Fawcett St, YO10 4AH

## { MOVEMENT EVENTS }

### DORCHESTER

**Fighting the new racism**

Sat 2 Sep, 1.30pm,  
Colliton Club,  
Colliton Park, DT1 1XJ  
Organised by Dorset Socialists

### GLASGOW

**Govanhill against racism music festival 2017**

Sun 27 and Mon 29 Aug,  
5.30pm, Queens Park Arena,  
Glasgow, G42 8QR.  
Tickets from skiddle.com  
Part of a weekend of events  
including a carnival and street  
parade Sat 26 Aug, go to  
[govanhillbaths.com/news](http://govanhillbaths.com/news)

### LLANELLI

**Why we commemorate the Llanelli 1911 railway strike**

Thu 17 Aug, 5pm,  
Llanelli Rural Council,  
Vauxhall, SA15 3BD  
Details at [bit.ly/2u8x0iv](http://bit.ly/2u8x0iv)

### SOUTH LONDON

**The Battle of Lewisham — how we stopped the Nazi National Front**

12 Aug, 1-4.30pm,  
Clifton Rise, SE14.  
Anniversary march organised  
by Unite Against Fascism.

### NATIONAL

**Demonstration at the Tory party conference**

Sun 1 Oct, Manchester.  
Called by the  
People's Assembly.  
[thepeoplesassembly.org.uk](http://thepeoplesassembly.org.uk)  
**Stand Up To Racism conference — confronting the rise in racism**  
Sat 21 Oct, 10.30am-4.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Euston Rd, London, NW1 2BJ.  
[standuptoracism.org.uk](http://standuptoracism.org.uk)

## CONTACT THE SWP

Phone 020 7840 5600

Email

[enquires@swp.org.uk](mailto:enquires@swp.org.uk)

Post PO Box 71327,  
London SE11 9BW

# Celebrating 1917

## DAY CONFERENCE

Saturday 4 November 2017

10.30am-5.30pm

£10 / £5 concessions.

Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church,  
235 Shaftesbury Avenue,  
London WC2H 8EP

## SPEAKERS INCLUDE

**Stephen Smith**

author of *Russia in Revolution*

**Cathy Porter**

author of *Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography*

**John Molyneux**

author of *Lenin for Today*

**Alex Callinicos**

author of *Imperialism & Global Political Economy*

**Dave Sherry**

author of *Russia 1917: Workers' Revolution & Festival of the Oppressed*

**Judith Orr**

author of *Marxism & Women's Liberation*

[www.swp.org.uk/celebrating-1917](http://www.swp.org.uk/celebrating-1917)



# Valerian—a magnificent sci-fi mess that gets lost in excess

As special effects catch up with the vision of filmmakers and directors, the plots of science fiction epics need to race to keep up, writes **Ken Olende**

**SUMMER BLOCKBUSTER** *Valerian* is visually stunning, particularly in a glorious montage of different types of aliens.

Director Luc Besson's English language French film is also creative and playful in a way that is rare for Hollywood movies.

Running jokes include the development of peaceful co-existence through learning to shake hands and the importance of wearing seatbelts in space ships.

But in the end it is a glorious mess. This is a full-blown space opera with galactic empires and hundreds of alien species.

Valerian (Dane DeHaan) and Laureline (Cara Delevingne) are some kind of elite super agents working for the government.

The film is loyal to its origins in a long-running French comic *Valerian* that started in 1967.

It was a major influence on the look of the original *Star Wars*. This is not an advantage decades later when it seems to be copying the more successful franchise.

As in *Doctor Who*, the heroes' ship could travel anywhere in space and time—though in the film the time travel doesn't appear.

## Idealised

Like *Star Trek* it is set in a human dominated future. But where the US series idealised the JF Kennedy era and US global dominance, *Valerian* developed after May 1968 in France.

It is much more anti-imperialist and suspicious of authority.

The French left at the time was very Maoist in outlook and tended to romanticise farming—or in this case fisher folk.

It also has a rather hippyish love of youth, and a more punky anti-authoritarianism. Though with the film's rather wooden acting this comes across more like teenage sulkiness.

DeHaan and Delevingne take everything rather too seriously and their constant banter is neither witty nor romantic enough.

The film is a pet project that Besson has been developing for decades.

The massive budget is all on screen, but it would be a better film if someone had controlled its wild excess.

It's good to see a future that isn't a simple dystopia.

But the plot gets lost in the dizzying array of new worlds, and the worlds get forgotten in the constant rush of the plot.

**Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets**

Directed by Luc Besson  
Out now



FATHER AND Son (section) (2013)

PICTURE: GREGORY CREWSDON

## Bleak, unsettling, and powerful images

### PHOTOGRAPHY

#### CATHEDRAL OF THE PINES

Gregory Crewdson  
23 June to 8 October  
Photographers' Gallery  
16-18 Ramillies St, Soho, London, W1F 7LW  
Open 10am to 8pm  
Free entry before 12 noon  
[thephotographersgalleryblog.org.uk](http://thephotographersgalleryblog.org.uk)

FOR THE first time ever three floors of the Photographers' Gallery have been given to a single exhibition—and it does not disappoint.

Gregory Crewdson has made his name creating images that meld the techniques of the photographer with all the production infrastructure of modern cinema.

Each image is meticulously planned and executed by a vast team under Crewdson's direction. Locations, lighting,

cast and logistics are given the same consideration and attention to detail as any Hollywood movie and the results are captured in stunning detail.

As with previous collections he studies the underbelly of small town America. His images are as devoid of action as they are of hope and warmth.

The impression is of aftermath and emptiness. The power of the photos lies in what they suggest rather than what they actually depict.

The Disturbance shows a woman surveying the scene outside her home as firefighters head to the centre of a frozen lake. The object of their attention is off screen but the numb expression on her face speaks volumes.

Under The Bridge is an apocalyptic scene of two naked women, one of them breast feeding an infant, staring blankly

at a fast flowing river. Nudity features heavily in this work. But never in an erotic way—the subjects look pale, vulnerable and exposed.

Father and Son depicts a bed-ridden man in a catatonic trance gazing apathetically at the ceiling of his room. His medication lies on a bedside table, bits of faded military medals are on the sideboard. His lonely looking son is reflected in the mirror like a ghost.

This is without doubt Crewdson's least theatrical and most unsettling work to date. Its cold colours and dreary settings study the potential solitude of the human condition through his trademark use of detailed scenes and the subtle power of suggestion.

For fans of the dark and unsettling this exhibition is not to be missed.

**Guy Smallman**

### EXHIBITION

#### IT'S CALLED ART MUM, LOOK IT UP

Polly Nor  
18–22 August  
Protein Studios, 31 New Inn Yard, EC2A 3EY, London  
[pollynor.com](http://pollynor.com)

ILLUSTRATOR AND artist Polly Nor's latest exhibition is taking place this month.

Recent work features a range of hand-drawn, digital



One of Polly Nor's illustrations

illustrations and sculptures.

Her illustrations often tell stories of anxiety, self doubt, and people's struggle for self-love.

### EVENTS

#### PARTITION OF INDIA—70 YEARS ON

11.30am, 18 August  
National Army Museum,  
Royal Hospital Rd, Chelsea,  
London SW3 4HT.  
[nam.ac.uk/whats-on](http://nam.ac.uk/whats-on)

THE NATIONAL Army Museum is holding a series of events to mark the 70th anniversary of the partition of India.

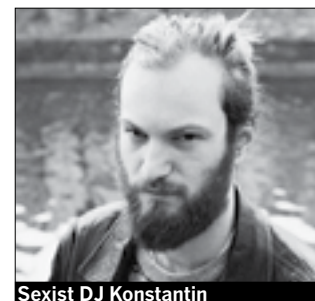
The British created Pakistan by partitioning India.

It was a parting shot after they were thrown out by a mass movement against colonial rule.

### MUSIC

IN AN interview with *Groove* magazine, DJ Konstantin said “women who seek careers in male-dominated industries like the DJ business must lose their ‘female qualities’ and become ‘manly’”.

The DJ and promoter collective Discwoman



Sexist DJ Konstantin

tweeted, “Anyone who may need more evidence Konstantin has said this verbatim to our face.”

Konstantin's label Giegling have had bookings in London cancelled since the interview was published last month.



**Venezuela's left wing president Nicolas Maduro faces opposition after elections to the Constituent Assembly last week. Who's out on the streets?**

THERE HAS been virulent opposition from the Venezuelan ruling class since Hugo Chavez was elected president in 1998.

It never accepted the legitimacy of Chavez, or working people having a bigger say.

The right who are out against Maduro are diverse and have different tactics.

Some probably prefer to provoke a military coup, some are looking for power through parliamentary means.

But they have one thing in common—to roll back all the gains of “Chavismo”.

None of them have any commitment to democracy, the people or constitutionality.

They will do anything to impose authoritarian rule that will roll back the gains of the last 15 years.

**A recent poll showed that 50 percent of people don't support Maduro or the opposition. Does the left still have popular support?**

NICOLAS Maduro's government has a level of popular support, but it's less than what Chavez had.

When Maduro was elected president in 2013, he won by just 1.1 percent against the right wing candidate Henrique Capriles Radonski.

The previous year Chavez had beaten Capriles by over 10 percent.

What's more important is to understand the support the left has among the working class, which mobilised to defend Chavez against the right in the 2000s.

Workers appear, at least, to be against the right opposition.

But this is a very different situation to the 2000s. Most will vote for Chavismo but there is a much higher abstention rate.

Its working class base has been demoralised and demobilised by the degeneration of Maduro's ruling PSUV socialist party.

An unaccountable bureaucracy has grown around the PSUV and corruption has grown massively.

The Chavistas have got majority support among the working class, but it's much less likely to actively defend Maduro.

**Why was the working class more likely to defend Chavez and how was it mobilised to do that?**

CHAVISMO DID not come out of nowhere.

Ever since the Caracazo

WORKERS HOLD a placard of Hugo Chavez during a May Day rally earlier this year

# MADURO STRUGGLE & THE LEFT

As right wing opposition to Venezuela's government grows, Andy Brown spoke to Tomáš Tengely-Evans about the forces on the ground and the potential to change society

Venezuela's president Nicolas Maduro

Uprising in 1989 there has been a big tradition of resistance to neoliberalism, austerity and the right.

This mass revolt in the capital Caracas opposed an International Monetary Fund (IMF) “structural adjustment package”.

This would have brought neoliberal reforms.

One of the better books in English on Venezuela is called *We Created Chavez* by George Ciccariello-Maher.

“

**We've seen the emergence of a new Chavista ruling class in Venezuela**

It shows how what happened with Chavez was a reflection, not an embodiment, of the popular movement.

Chavez articulated working class people's demands.

After he became president, between 2002 and 2005, there was a massive level of active mobilisation. Three key battles showed this.

The first was a right wing coup attempt against Chavez in 2002. This was stopped in its tracks, not by clever

political manoeuvring but by popular mobilisation.

In particular, the slum dwellers of the “barrios” in Caracas came out in their tens if not hundreds of thousands.

The year after there was a ruthless lockout by the oil bosses. The right wing would have sacrificed the whole Venezuelan economy to regain power.

Again that was defeated by mobilisation of oil workers and their working class allies.

The following year the right tried to depose Chavez constitutionally and huge mobilisations on the streets saw it off.

At the time of mass mobilisation, the Chavez government was making reforms around health, education and housing.

Rank and file workers were also taking initiatives.

You had communal commands, which gave people in working class neighbourhoods more control.

There was the formation of independent unions free from bureaucrats in the pocket of the ruling class and discussion of workers' control of industry.

There was a massive groundswell of feeling that Chavez's project really did mean something in terms of changing society for the better.

**What's happened to those reforms now?**

THE REFORMS have been curtailed to a very large degree, partly by a catastrophic drop in oil prices.

The reforms were predicated on an economic boom in commodity production, particularly oil. That's now over.

But the lack of reforms is also linked to high levels of corruption. What we've really seen is the emergence of a new Chavista ruling class that doesn't represent and isn't accountable to the rank and file.

It's a new class of corrupt politicians who see having control of the state machine as a way of getting rich.

Venezuelans call it the “Bolivarian bourgeoisie”.

There is increasing militarisation of the economy.

More than half of the cabinet and the regional governors are army officers. And the army has been put in charge of key parts of the economy such as gold mining.

This has moved them away from any form of accountability to the working class.

**Is there still rank and file organisation on the ground?**

IT'S NOT case that the Venezuelan working class and poor will roll over and let whatever happens happen.

They are very hostile to the right—the most popular slogan is, “They will not come back”.

There are a large number of popular organisations on a local level in working class areas. Inside the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) there is an identifiable, although very diverse, left that has always been critical of these sorts of trends under Chavismo.

This left still publishes and tries to mobilise, and is still fighting on the ground for the kind of project that Chavez envisaged.

**Can this working class movement resist the right now?**

THE RIGHT are looking for an end game.

They want to make the country ungovernable and bring the government down—and they are not too fussed about how they do that.

If there isn't any strength to resist this from the working class, then it can't be resisted.

The only way to stop the right returning is through active mobilisation of working class people in their own defence.

It cannot be done through Maduro's methods of making clever compromises with right wingers who don't want to compromise.

A similar process of compromising on the early promise of insurrectionary movements also took place in Bolivia, Ecuador and other parts of Latin America.

Working class resistance has to be rebuilt.

**In Britain the right is calling on Jeremy Corbyn to condemn the Venezuelan government. They say Venezuela shows left policies can't work. How can socialists respond?**

AS SOCIALISTS the first thing we have to do is defend the Venezuelan working class and the “Bolivarian process” because it has brought huge changes.

It hasn't changed class relations fundamentally, it hasn't challenged the state but it did make a difference to working class people.

We know what's coming if the right returns—it will be a bloody awful authoritarian ruling class.

We should be completely against the idea that it doesn't

There have been right wing protests against Venezuela's government (top) and former leader Hugo Chavez (above) had higher levels of support

matter what happens between Maduro and the opposition.

It matters in Venezuela, Latin America and the world because Venezuela was an example for the left.

But socialists cannot be cheerleaders for a particular reformist project or excuse or deny serious mistakes.

And we can't rely on left leaders. The point about socialism is that it's got to be working class people liberating themselves.

We have got to be critical of the bureaucratisation, the corruption and the demobilisation of the working class.

Venezuela saw the active and critical participation of the working class. That's what began changing society for the better.

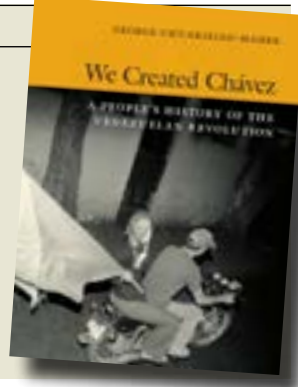
## READ MORE

● **Venezuela and revolution in the 21st century** by Joseph Choonara, £1

● **The reckoning—the future of the Venezuelan Revolution** ISJ article by Mike Gonzales [bit.ly/2wrStyy](http://bit.ly/2wrStyy)

● **We Created Chavez** by George Ciccariello-Maher, £16.99

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)



## Does the fight for workers' power mean dictatorship?

The ruling class won't allow a socialist society to develop, so workers need their own instruments of class rule



THE SOVIET gave people direct control over decisions

### 1917 TIMELINE

**August sees 440 cases of peasants and soldiers seize the land of big estates**

● Prices rose by 248 percent while real wages fell by over 57 percent since 1913

● The Provisional Government can barely keep up with the amount of work required to suppress countless uprisings

and soldiers. This kind of state organisation is more democratic than anything under capitalism.

Through it, ordinary people have direct control over every decision that affects their lives. But it's also an instrument of class rule—working class rule.

### Bloody

The capitalist class won't just allow the new socialist society to develop. The old capitalist class in Russia waged a bloody civil war to crush the revolution after the soviets took power.

So any new workers' state needs repressive powers to take property from the capitalists and defend the revolution by force.

This is what “dictatorship of the proletariat” means.

It's not the same as how the capitalists use their repressive powers to enforce the exploitation of workers.

The workers' state uses its repressive powers to end that exploitation.

Lenin, Engels and Marx didn't see this as a permanent setup. Once ordinary people take full control of capitalists' “private” property, the basis for two opposing classes disappears—and so does the need for a state.

The workers' state—not the capitalist state—eventually “withers away”. But without that dictatorship of the proletariat—workers' control and democracy—socialism could never exist.

This is part of a series of weekly articles on the Russian Revolution [tinyurl.com/sw1917](http://tinyurl.com/sw1917)

“

**Only workers' control and democracy can bring about socialism**



# Tory figures expose benefit cap cruelty

by DAVE SEWELL

**THE NUMBER** of people hit by the Tory benefit cap rocketed after the threshold was lowered last November, according to government figures released last week.

The Tories lowered the maximum benefits any household could claim from £500 a week to £384.62 outside London.

The figures show the devastating scale of its impact.

Some 68,000 households had their benefits capped in May of this year—up from 20,000 before the cap was lowered.

Some 71 percent of these are single parent families, most with children aged five or under.

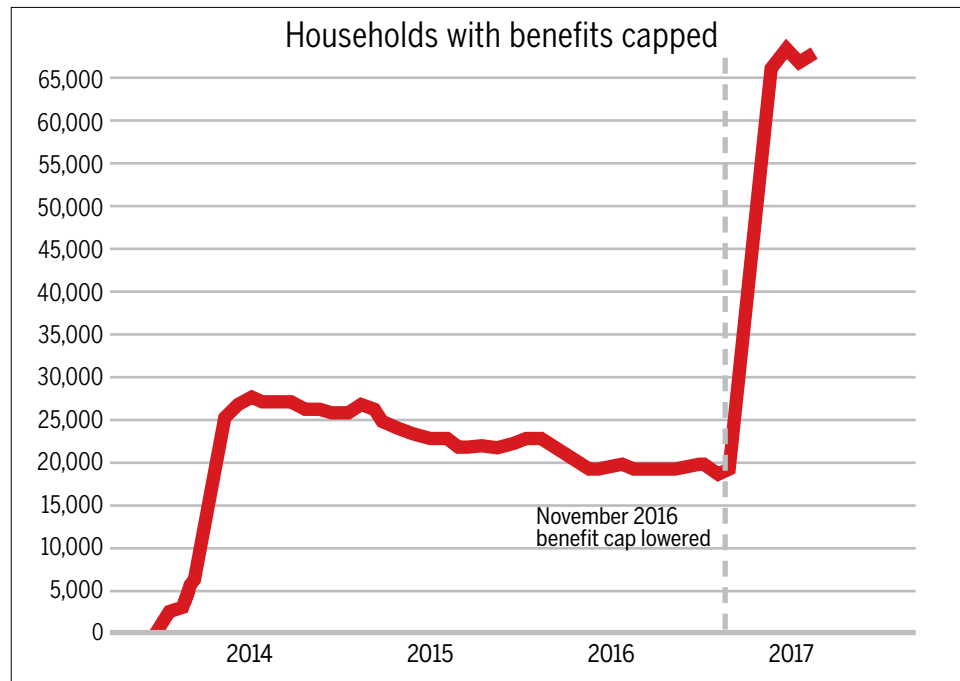
And 15 percent are sick or disabled.

## Threshold

More than three quarters of households capped are affected because of the lower threshold.

Around half lose £50 or more a week from their income.

The benefit cap has always



been more about stigmatising the poor than saving money.

The government contrasts the amount received by some benefit claimants with the wage of a low-paid worker.

Unemployed people shouldn't be scapegoated for low pay, but in any case this

is a bogus comparison. The majority of benefit claimants are low-paid workers.

Single unemployed people receive far less than the cap. Those receiving more tend to be families struggling with housing costs.

Some 92 percent of

households hit by the cap were in receipt of child tax credits, a benefit for working families.

That's compared to just 17 percent receiving job seekers' allowance.

The Tories push the idea that taking money off people

## FIGURE IT OUT

**68,000**

The number of households that had their benefits capped this May

**20,000**

The number before the cap was lowered last November

**16,960**

The number of single parent families with children under the age of two hit by the cap

The High Court ruled in June that the cap unlawfully discriminates against single parent families with children under two.

They are three times more likely to be capped than two parent families with children the same age.

The government is appealing against the ruling. If it loses it will have to change the legislation.

## Single

But the figures show that some 16,960 single parent families with children under two are now hit by the cap.

The government's release makes much of the fact that 81,000 households are no longer hit by the cap.

In just 42 percent of these cases, the main reason was claimants getting more work.

Thousands more were claiming less housing benefit—often a sign of having lost their homes.

Since the cap was lowered the number of new households affected by it has outnumbered those escaping it.

Far from offering a route out of poverty, the benefit cap traps people in it.

**JOIN THE  
SOCIALIST  
WORKERS  
PARTY**

- ☐ Yes, I'd like to be a member  
☐ Please send me some information

Name .....  
Address .....  
.....  
Postcode .....  
Phone .....  
Email .....  
Return to SWP membership department, PO Box 71327,  
London SE11 9BW. Phone 020 7840 5602  
Email membership@swp.org.uk



## Subscribe to Socialist Worker

Have Socialist Worker delivered with your post every week for a direct debit of £5 a month

I want to subscribe to Socialist Worker with a monthly direct debit of £5

Name .....

Address.....

Postcode .....

E-mail .....

Phone .....

I would like \_\_\_\_ extra papers to sell  
(this will not be deducted from my bank account)

For official use only—this is not part of the instructions to your bank/building society

Sherborne Publications,  
PO Box 71327 London SE11 9BW

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by direct debit

Originator identification no. 9 7 3 3 5 5

Our reference no.

.....

1. Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To the manager:

Bank/building society .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

2. Name(s) of account holder(s)

.....

3. Branch sort code / /

4. Bank/building society account no.

5. Instruction to your bank or building society

Please pay Sherborne Publications direct debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the direct debit guarantee.

I understand that this instruction may remain with Sherborne Publications and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank or building society.

Signature(s) .....

Date .....

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions from some types of account



### Direct debit guarantee

■ This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.

■ If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit Sherborne Publications will notify you ten working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Sherborne Publications to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.

■ If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by Sherborne Publications or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.

■ If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Sherborne Publications asks you to.

■ You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

### Socialist Worker Subscriptions

Post PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW  
Phone 020 7840 5601

Web www.socialistworker.co.uk



# Tories' punishment and privatisation fuels crisis

Prison riots that broke out last week put the spotlight on the overcrowded jail conditions in England and Wales under Tory rule. **Simon Basketter** investigates

**PRISON officer riot squads were sent into HM Prison the Mount in Hertfordshire last week.**

Prisoners reportedly took over its 250-inmate Nash wing in the two days of rioting.

A separate incident also broke out at HMP Erlestoke in Wiltshire. Five prison officers were reportedly hospitalised, including one who is undergoing surgery for a broken jaw.

At the Mount recent weeks have seen inmates locked in their cells all day, with cold food delivered to their cell doors. A woman who said her son is an inmate tweeted that he had been on "24 hour lock down for weeks" at the prison.

Other prisoners complained of not being allowed out to shower or make phone calls.

An assessment from the jail's Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) said that last summer "all the ingredients were in place for the Mount to suffer disorder".

That is true across the prison system. And Tory policies are undermining health and safety.

A contract outsourcing prison maintenance meant checks on

fire equipment as well as tests for legionella have not been carried out. Broken showers have been left unrepaired for months.

The Ministry of Justice said that it entered into the £500 million five-year contracts with Carillion and Geo Amey without full knowledge of the costs.

According to prison affairs academic Alex Cavendish the system is on the "brink of a meltdown".

Attacks and self-harm have reached an all-time high in prisons in England and Wales—119 people killed themselves in 2016.

In 2015 the rate of self-inflicted deaths among the prison population was 120 per 100,000 people—over ten times higher than the general population.

## Assaults

There was a 20 percent rise in the number of reported assaults to 26,643 in the year to March. That includes 7,159 attacks on staff.

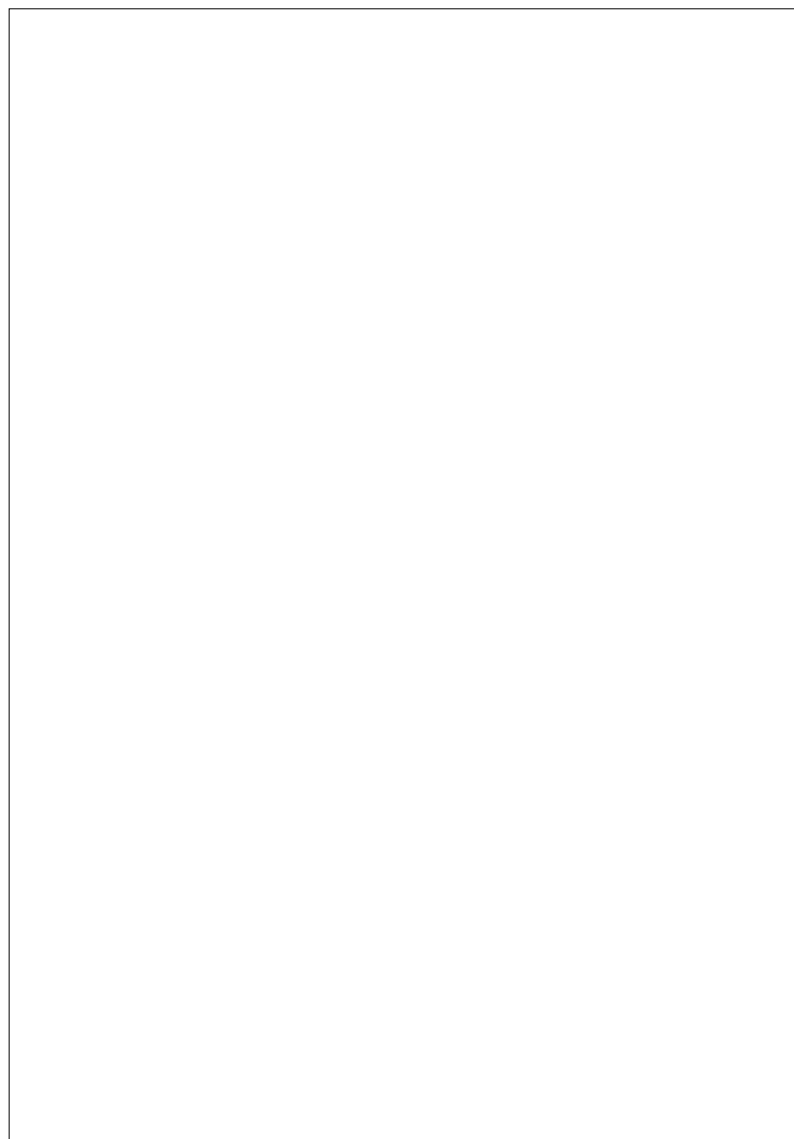
The number of self-harm cases reported was at a record high of 40,414, a rise of 17 percent.

Last month Peter Clarke, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, described the conditions some inmates are held in as "squalid, dirty and disgraceful".

Some 76 of the 117 prisons in England and Wales are officially overcrowded. They hold 9,496 people more than they were designed to.

Around 21,000 people are held in overcrowded cells—nearly a quarter of the whole prison population. The majority of those are doubling up in cells designed for one.

This level of overcrowding has remained broadly unchanged for the last 12 years.



THE PRISON riot squad is being used more and more (see below)

## The screws' riot squad

**SPECIALIST TEAMS** of prison officers are used to break up prison riots.

They take officers from a number of prisons into what are called "tornado teams". These are controlled from a command centre in London to retake prisons.

The way they operate is secretive.

The government and the prison service refuse on operational grounds requests for information about the equipment or tactics the squads use.

The squads of 50 officers have shields and PR-24 sidearm batons.

This is a further escalation from control and restraint teams who are used to attack individual prisoners in riot gear under normal prison rules.

Tornado units are being called out in increasing numbers.

In 2011 they were called to three incidents and in 2012 two, but in 2014 the number of incidents rose to 16, with 15 calls in 2015 and 16 calls in 2016.

G4S, Serco and Sodexo staff are all used in the Tornado teams, though getting attacked by state robocops probably feels similar to being attacked by private ones.



**The rate of self-inflicted deaths in prisons is 10 times higher than the general population**

## Child lock-up

**NO YOUNG** offender institution is safe according to the Chief Inspector of Prisons. Some 858 children were in custody in England and Wales in March 2017.

Youth Justice Board figures for 2016 showed 8.9 self-harm incidents per 100 children compared with 4.1 in 2011.

Assault rates were 18.9 per 100 children compared with 9.7 in 2011.

Some 42 children in custody are 14 or younger. More than 43 percent are from a black or minority ethnic background.

There are about 360 "restraint" incidents a month.

England and Wales has the highest imprisonment rate in western Europe



Prison population rate (per 100,000 population)

## More people are sent back

**ANYONE** leaving custody who has served two days or more is now required to serve a minimum of 12 months under supervision.

The number of people recalled to custody following their release has increased by nearly 1,000 people since the changes in 2015.

Some 6,554 people were in prison on recall at the end of March.

## Sparking up discontent?

**Newspapers** claimed prisoners set off a bomb in a Cardiff jail.

The truth was simpler. Smoking was banned at the prison.

Prisoners dismantled kettles and television power cables to light cigarettes made from tea bags and shredded nicotine patches.

One inmate ignited a plastic container with tea and coffee whitener inside. The Prison Officers Association called for the removal of whiteners from jails.

## Large rise in Muslims in jail

**OVER A** quarter of the prison population are from a minority ethnic group.

The number of Muslim prisoners has more than doubled over the past 14 years. In 2002 there were 5,502 Muslims in prison. By 2017 this had risen to 13,000.



## IN BRIEF

**Scaffolders' strike set to start in Goole**

SCAFFOLDERS at Eggborough power station in Goole, East Yorkshire, have called a series of pay strikes.

The Unite union members are set to strike for 48 hours from next Thursday. They plan a further 48-hour walkout from 21 August and a continuous strike from 29 August.

The Cape Industrial Services firm is paying them £15.12 an hour. But under the National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry workers say they should be on £19.34.

**Tributes paid to fallen comrade**

ALMOST 300 people paid tribute to Dave Gibson in Barnsley last Thursday.

Dave, a Socialist Workers' Party member and trade unionist, died last month. A collection raised over £900 for Stand Up To Racism.

**Fran Postlethwaite**

**Anti-racist football fans organise**

ANTI-RACIST FOOTBALL fans at several clubs, including Arsenal, Liverpool and Sheffield Wednesday, have organised leafletting against the Football Lads Alliance (FLA) this Saturday.

The FLA plans a demonstration on 7 October.

It claims it's not racist, but the FLA's first mobilisation in June ended with racist speeches against Muslims.

●Go to [standupTORacism.org.uk](http://standupTORacism.org.uk) for more details

**Racist EDL plans protest in Bradford**

THE ENGLISH Defence League has said it will march in Bradford and Keighley on Saturday 2 September.

Anti-fascists will hold a counter-demonstration.

●Details at [uaf.org.uk](http://uaf.org.uk)

**Journalists at FT demand equal pay**

JOURNALISTS AT the Financial Times (FT) newspaper have said they are prepared to take industrial action to get equal pay for women.

The NUJ union members slammed the gender pay gap at the FT which they say is as big as a 13 percent.

**Prepare for next civil service fight**

A RECENT High Court victory by the PCS union forced the Tories to reinstate the 2010 civil service redundancy scheme they tried to scrap.

The Tories' defeat is good news for every public sector worker.

But the Tories will surely launch another attack on redundancy payments. Strikes can stop them.

## LGBT+



**PART OF a thousands-strong Pride march celebrating LGBT+ rights in Leeds last Saturday. Around 300,000 people descended on Brighton on the same day for the town's annual Pride march and festival**

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

## CINEMA WORKERS

# Picturehouse walkout ahead of fresh ballot

by ALISTAIR FARROW

PICTUREHOUSE cinema workers walked out across five sites in London last Friday and Saturday.

The action was part of a long-running fight for the Living Wage of £9.75 an hour in London and £8.45 outside London.

With a new ballot running from next Wednesday until 29 August, these will be their last walkouts this summer.

Niall, a worker at the central London site, told Socialist Worker, "I think the ballot result will go fine.

"At our site I think we'll increase the amount of people involved.

"We've got people coming off probation who are keen to get involved."

The leadership of the Bectu section of the Prospect union sees the strikes as one part of a broader campaign.

That includes drumming



On the picket line

up community support and raising the profile of the strike in the media to shame parent company Cineworld.

Those elements are important, but the main focus should be on shutting down the cinemas through strikes and spreading them.

There are 24 Picturehouse cinemas in Britain and 82 Cineworld cinemas.

About 70 percent of Cineworld's front-of-house staff in Britain—3,750, including

700 at Picturehouse—are on zero hours contracts. If even a section of them joined the fight it would transform the campaign.

A serious recruitment campaign coupled with longer strikes could push the dispute forward.

**Dialogue**

As one striker at the Ritzy site in south London told Socialist Worker, "There needs to be a two-way dialogue between Picturehouse and Cineworld workers.

"They need to get involved in the campaign to increase living standards as well."

Bosses sacked four union members recently.

Three of them were set to have an employment tribunal hearing appealing the decision this Thursday.

The timing of the new ballot could be an attempt by the union leadership to back down from a fight through strikes.

●Longer at [bit.ly/2uipiSb](http://bit.ly/2uipiSb)

## CLEANERS

## Outsourcers swept away

CLEANERS IN the Unison union at the Soas university in London celebrated victory in their 11-year battle to be brought back in house.

Consuelo Moreno, a leading cleaner, said, "It was an incredible struggle alongside students and supporters."

The Justice For Workers campaign began in 2006 and has won holiday pay, sick pay and pensions.

Soas has now guaranteed that all workers will be brought back in house.

Consuelo added, "This struggle has not just been for Soas.

"We are going to support every workplace that wants to do away with outsourcing."

Their victory follows news that cleaners at the nearby LSE university will be brought back in house by next year.

## DISTRIBUTION WORKERS

## Three-week strike at Argos

OVER 1,000 Argos distribution workers plan to strike for three weeks from next Tuesday.

The Unite union members are demanding a national agreement on redundancy and severance packages.

It comes after bosses moved nearly 500 workers from the Argos hub in Lutterworth, Leicestershire,

to one run by outsourcer Wincanton in Kettering, Northamptonshire.

Workers fear attacks on terms, conditions and jobs across their five sites.

They are based in Basildon in Essex, Bridgwater in Somerset, Castleford in West Yorkshire, Heywood in Greater Manchester and Barton in Staffordshire.

## WHISKY WORKERS

## Bosses are on the rocks

UNITE AND GMB union members at Chivas whisky bottling plant in Dumbarton in Scotland struck on Monday for a better pay deal.

The threat of strikes saw Chivas increase its original offer to a four-year deal of

1.5 percent in the first year and rises linked to inflation in subsequent years.

Workers in Paisley—a plant marked for closure by 2019—voted to accept the new offer but those in Dumbarton rightly held out for more.

## TRANSPORT ROUND UP

**UNITE UNION members on the Scottish National Party government's fleet of five ships have called five two-day strikes starting this Thursday.**

**Further strikes are planned next week.**

**Marine Scotland vessels carry out research and monitor fishing activity. Their crews are paid far**

**less than workers on the nationalised CalMac ferries.**

■**THE RMT rail workers' union has demanded an immediate halt to plans that would "unleash privatisation" of Network Rail infrastructure in Wales.**

**It's part of Welsh Labour's major modernisation of South Wales Valleys routes.**

## HOUSING WORKERS

## High morale at Mears

HOUSING maintenance workers in Manchester went back to work on Monday after a four-week strike.

The Unite union members are employed by contractor Mears to maintain homes run by council management body Northwards.

They are fighting for pay parity with similar council workers.

Morale was high outside the Mears depot on the last strike day last Friday, with around 30 workers on the picket line.

They aim to be back out within weeks after a new ballot.

## INDUSTRIAL NOTES

## Do workers need a new strike ballot after 12 weeks?

GROUPS OF workers who've led impressive strikes this year have then halted their action to run a second ballot once 12 weeks have passed.

This can seem like a necessary evil—but the benefits it brings are few and the cost much too high.

Workers have the legal right to withdraw their labour with or without a ballot.

If they do so they are not breaking the law, but they are in breach of contract.

Getting an official mandate means that, for 12 weeks, the bosses cannot respond with "selective dismissal" of strikers.

That means they legally can't just fire you for

striking—though they can still find other excuses.

Conversely, after the mandate expires all other legal protections still apply.

In particular, bosses still aren't allowed to sack you for trade union related activity.

So the difference made by the 12-week ban on selective dismissal isn't enormous.

**Costly**

Either way, to get these rules enforced any sacked strikers must wage a long, costly and difficult employment tribunal fight.

If they win it will be far too late to influence the dispute.

The real power to stop sackings lies in workers'

solidarity—the very power they are exercising by going on strike. So the best protection is staying mobilised.

Delays to action work in the bosses' favour—that's why the Tories' anti-union laws encourage them.

To run a new ballot and then give legal notice for new strikes takes time—often a month or more.

Every time momentum is lost it has to be rebuilt in the face of fatigue and frustration. But reballots are not mandatory.

Workers at the National Gallery continued fighting privatisation and victimisation for much longer than

12 weeks in 2015. We've also seen unofficial strikes in recent years with no ballot—from social workers to postal workers.

A second ballot needn't be a disaster. If it's called far enough in advance workers can ballot while still striking.

**Holding**

If officials insist on holding up further strikes for a new vote, workers can organise protests and meetings to keep active between walkouts.

But choosing between the real protection offered by their action and the phoney protection offered by the law, workers should be in no doubt.



## PAY CAMPAIGNS

# More action called as pay fights hot up

by TOMÁŠ TENGY-EVANS

**CHANTS OF “low pay—no way” rang out in the City of London financial district last Thursday as workers from three disputes took to the streets.**

Outsourced hospital cleaners at Barts Health NHS Trust in east London, British Airways cabin crew and Bank of England workers were all striking for higher pay.

Over 200 of the hospital workers and others protested outside their employer Serco's shareholders' meeting at JP Morgan bank. Agnes, a Unite union member, told Socialist Worker, “This is where they come to look at their profits.

“We can't pay rent, we can't pay the bills, but Serco wants us to do more work for less pay.”

## Series

The hospital workers have now called a series of five-day strikes set to begin on Friday of next week.

The growing crowd then marched on the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in Holborn in central London in protest at British Airways (BA) using Qatar Airlines planes to scab.

The protest marked the BA workers' 57th day of strike—they are set to extend their



OUTSIDE SERCO shareholders' meeting strikers send a message

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

current walkout by another two weeks from 16 August, hitting the busy bank holiday period. BA striker Amo told Socialist Worker, “There's no point going back after seven months if there's no difference.

“BA are trying everything not to give in, but there is pressure—there are more delays and cancellations because of industrial action.”

Outside the CAA Len McCluskey, Unite general

secretary, pledged the union's full support for all three disputes. “You have my personal support and the support of the Unite national executive,” he said.

The protest then went on to the Bank of England where workers in the maintenance, parlours and security departments are fighting a miserly 1 percent pay offer.

Mercedes Sanchez, Unite regional officer, told Socialist Worker, “If they don't

negotiate we will escalate with other departments. This is just the beginning.”

As workers chanted “Bank of England—bank of shame”, inside bank governor Mark Carney was giving a gloomy report about British capitalism's future. His message was simple—that workers should pay the price.

These disputes show that there's a mood to fight around pay.

●Read more [bit.ly/2vFmSwp](http://bit.ly/2vFmSwp)

## POSTAL WORKERS

## Royal Mail could ballot as talks ‘far from agreement’

ROYAL MAIL workers could ballot for industrial action as early as this month. Bosses are preparing to launch a massive attack on workers' pensions, wages and conditions.

Members of the CWU union are set to meet for a national briefing in London on Monday of next week. The union's postal executive committee meets the following day to decide whether to ballot.

Royal Mail bosses want to scrap workers' defined benefits pension scheme. Closing the scheme could steal thousands of pounds from pensions every year.

Bosses also want to push through a series of attacks that will cut wages, make it easier to sack workers and

force worse conditions on new starters. And plans to get rid of the union's area delivery reps could seriously weaken the CWU's organisation.

Union officials say they are still in talks with Royal Mail, but that they are “far from agreement”.

It comes after a series of events across Britain mobilising union activists, and several impressive workplace meetings preparing members for a fight.

The union has to ballot for a national strike if Royal Mail doesn't back down from its attack. Bosses want to trample all over pensions, pay and conditions. Only a serious fightback can stop them.

**Nick Clark**

## HOUSING CAMPAIGNS

## Lendlease refuses to give social housing guarantee

THE CAMPAIGN against a disastrous housing redevelopment in Haringey, north London, has taken important steps forward.

Some 30 people attended a tenants' meeting on the Northumberland Park estate last week. Activists have leafleted estates and areas that will be affected by the demolition.

Councillors have given verbal guarantees that council tenants will have the right to return after redevelopment on the same tenancies.

However, the property developer Lendlease, with which the council is in partnership, has admitted

there is no place in its business plan for such a guarantee.

Lendlease has a track record of riding over the council's concerns, particularly around social housing.

●No Permission for Demolition demonstration 23 September

■HOUSING campaigners are getting organised for a national housing summit on 7 October. A national organising meeting is set to take place on 9 September 11am, at Blemindsbury Tenants Hall, Dombey St, London, WC1N 3PF.

For an activists' action plan go to [bit.ly/2vbj7JG](http://bit.ly/2vbj7JG)

## FAST FOOD RIGHTS

## McDonald's workers demand £10 an hour and a union

WORKERS AT two McDonald's restaurants are preparing to ballot for strikes. The Bfawu union members in Cambridge and Crayford, south London, are fighting for a £10 an hour wage and their right to belong to the trade union of their choice.

“We did not start this because we wanted to strike, but just to protect ourselves and unionise,” Shen from the Crayford store told Socialist Worker.

“We've been forced to hold this ballot because McDonald's ignored us. When we followed the grievance procedure, nothing happened.

“We don't deserve to be treated the way we are but we've had to fight all the way.”

Shen talked about how workers built the union. “Organising at work was

really hard to begin with,” she said. “We kept being told that McDonald's workers would be impossible to organise because of the high turnover of staff and other factors.

### Listening

“But it was literally a case of just talking to people, listening to their stories and thinking about how we can do something about it.

“At my store one guy lost his flat because his shifts were cut.

“A lot of people joined the union

because of the manager, in order to protect themselves.”

The workers' campaign takes inspiration from the Fight For \$15 movement in the US.

Over 10 million workers in the US are set to have the minimum wage in their states set to \$15 an hour as a result of a large and militant campaign of strikes and protests.

That mood of rebellion can be brought to Britain.

“It shows people what is possible,” said Shen. “Jeremy Corbyn's success can inspire people as well. With Labour doing well at the moment

people are more open to left wing ideas like joining a trade union—that's really important.”

Another innovation from the US is the idea of “walkbacks”.

Supporters walk workers back to work after going on strike to prevent management victimisation. If workers vote to strike activists should consider doing this alongside fast food workers in Britain.

The demand for £10 an hour has been popularised by Labour's election manifesto and can help give confidence to fast food workers that haven't been a focus for the big trade unions in Britain.

This new ballot will hopefully be the first of many in a sector where wages are low and conditions are grim. But workers in McDonald's are showing it's possible to get organised.



Protesting against McDonald's

## STEEL

## Sheffield workers fight for first pay rise in a decade

by MATTHEW REEVE

STEEL WORKERS in Sheffield are planning their next strike after a two-week walkout over pay ended on Monday.

The 18 Community union members at ROM Ltd on Brightside Lane began a work to rule and overtime ban on Tuesday. They are angry at parent company Celsa as they have not had a wage rise in a decade.

“We supported Celsa, why don't they support us?” one striker said. “We've not had a pay rise in the past 10 years. What we've done for them in hard times includes being asked not to put in for wage rises in

times of recession, which we've done four times.”

The firm also stopped £15 Christmas gift vouchers, cut long service awards and shift premium payments and changed staff to monthly pay with no financial help.

Eventually, union members said enough is enough. They are determined to win and agency workers in the firm have started taking union membership packs.

“It's about time the firm supported us,” said Community branch secretary Chris Stevenson. The striker said, “They like to say we're one big happy family. I wouldn't treat my family like that.”



# Bin strikers won't take bosses' trash

by DAVE SEWELL

**REFUSE COLLECTORS in Birmingham are on strike for the fifth week against the Labour council's plan to tear up their working conditions.**

Council bosses want to get rid of 113 "grade three" workers and impose a new rota with more work and less rest (see below).

But the Unite union members are putting up a fight, striking for three hours a day.

Most members have turned out for dozens-strong picket lines at four depots around the city.

Rows of lorries stood empty at Redfern depot in south east Birmingham last Thursday as almost everyone, including agency workers, picketed the main gate.

Strikers say that workers in other unions are refusing to cross the picket lines.

## Cutbacks

Mike told Socialist Worker, "We can't afford not to win. People could lose their houses because of the cutbacks."

"And Birmingham city council is such a huge organisation, if they do this to us



WORKERS ON the picket line at the Perry Barr site

PICTURES: SOCIALIST WORKER

they can do it to all their workers. So we're not just doing this for us, we're doing this for everyone."

Over at Perry Barr in north Birmingham, Stan agreed. "A lot of us have been here more than 25 years," he said.

"These people aren't just colleagues, they're mates. And

this affects us all. I'm a driver, there's no direct threat to my grade, but we're not daft. If they get rid of grade three we're next.

"As for those on the lower grades, it's about progression—if the higher grades go it's their future."

The council argues that

its changes are a necessary response to a huge overspend.

Workers agree that money is being wasted but they point to the huge payouts made to successive bosses.

The People's Assembly held a meeting in support of the bin workers last Thursday. And FBU union

members came down to the picket line on Monday.

To ride out the strike the council has hired contractors and told workers to throw away paper it would otherwise have sold to recycling firms.

Two of the main costs it cites—agency fees and overtime pay—are due to

understaffing that only the unions' resistance has stopped from getting worse.

Paul told Socialist Worker, "This council doesn't have a strategy to resolve the dispute. Its strategy is to break the union. We've no room to manoeuvre left—we simply have to win this."

## Impact

The action is hitting hard, and strike-breaking efforts have had a limited impact.

Unite has publicly warned it could keep the action up until September. Workers predict a longer fight, saying they may reballot before then to get a legal mandate for action right up to December.

Workers in other unions at the council should back their fight and build solidarity among their fellow council workers to beat back the council chiefs.

Dave said, "There's only one way forward. If we've got to go long haul, we'll go long haul."

Support the workers' hardship fund. Send cheques payable to "Unite the union" to Unite the union, Transport House, 9-17 Victoria Street, West Bromwich B70 8HX

## Sacking lookouts on lorries could cause accidents

THE council's restructuring is an immediate threat to every worker, striker Stan explained.

The grade three workers play a safety critical role as lookouts on the back of the lorries.

Stan said, "This is one of the most dangerous jobs in Britain."

"We had a vehicle crash into one of our loaders a few years ago."

"It pushed him into the bins, breaking his leg and three ribs, and puncturing his spleen."

"If the bins hadn't been there he would have been impaled and killed."

Without the grade three



Wheellie good—overflowing bins show the strike's impact

workers watching the traffic, such tragedies could become more common.

Meanwhile the council's new rota takes away a much-needed rest day.

Stan said, "They say shorter days will make the job less physically demanding. But we'll have an increased target in a shorter day. It's bullshit."

"And it's because it's physically demanding that we need the rest days to recharge."

Refuse workers in Wigan have also voted to strike against the imposition of new working practices. The Unison union members voted by 80 percent for industrial action

## Labour council's disgrace

THE ATTACK on the refuse workers would be bad enough from the Tories.

But workers have a right to expect better from Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party.

Mike said, "I'm a Labour supporter myself, but this is changing that."

"I voted for Labour at the last

election, I don't know if I can do that now."

Paul said, "Labour says it has an affinity with the working class, but with this council we're not seeing that."

"It's run by 'Bitterites', people with a right wing agenda."

"Unite has already said it could withdraw funding from some Labour politicians."

"And we want Jeremy Corbyn to put pressure on the council."

Jeremy Corbyn should stop Labour councils making cuts